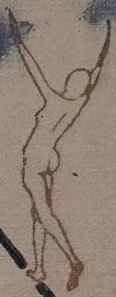
The Life of Isadora Duncan

1921 - 1927

THE UNTOLD STORY



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THE UNTOLD STORY

ISADORA DUNCAN'S LIFE

1921-1927

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ISADORA DUNCAN WITH HER DAUGHTER DEIRDRE, PARIS (1911)
Photograph by Paul Berger

The Untold Story

The Life of Isadora Duncan

1921-1927

by

MARY DESTI

Illustrated

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DEAR DESTI,

I want to write just a word, although I don't know any of comfort.

I am so glad you were here. There would have been a vacant space around the bed of flowers which you, because you loved her more than anyone, filled.

Thank you for giving us, in the very moments of the tragedy which might have been merely convulsive with horror, more knowledge of her—for making her seem to live more radiantly by what you said of her when she was dead. When we meet in N.Y. I shall want to talk to you about preserving what you remember that the rest of us never knew.

I feel that none other than her tragic genius could have imagined such a perfect and terrible end; and, I think, no one but herself could have equalled your courage and passion then.

I believe that she was the greatest woman we shall ever see.

God bless you,

GLENWAY W.

[A letter from Glenway Westcott to Mary Desti. The original is in the possession of the author.]

Twenty years of friendship, each year a jewel, I've strung upon the rosary of my heart, to count it on and on, and relive each happy memory, and weep and weep again, the sorrows that bind us perhaps closer and fonder than all the joys.

Every pain you've felt has been twice felt by me, first for the sorrow itself, then for you. Twenty years is all too short a time to sit and learn the wisdom of the gods, from one who only has divine expression, and scarcely to be understood by mortal clay—by one who never even breathed or thought or knew that wonders such as you do know, were wrapped within a human soul.

A little ball of earth I rolled to your feet one day and you were kind and planted bits of knowledge here and there within the barren soil, but only very few burst forth in bloom, the others lie silently waiting for another incarnation, better fitted to bring forth such precious things. So perhaps your twenty years are not all wasted, though friendship can give no better thing than its poor self, and this I've given always.

MARY.

[A letter to Isadora Duncan from Mary Desti—written about 1921.]

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INTRODUCTION

After Isadora Duncan had finished the story of her life, ending in 1921, I begged her to begin at once her Russian and other experiences from 1921 on. This she put off doing from day to day, in spite of all my entreaties. However, two days before her death, being in a thoughtful mood, she began, declaring all the time she could never write another page. After great effort, she came to me where I was reading and threw into my lap the three pages she had started, saying, "Here, you know the rest of my life as well as I do. Write it yourself. I will not do another line." And she never did.

I put those three loose leaves in my pocket and after the funeral I found them there and decided that, after all, her words were prophetic and it was my duty to finish her book. I left with Irma (Isadora's pupil) immediately for Russia; the reason for my going to Moscow was to see the children of Isadora's school, with the object of bringing them later to dance in America and to verify the data I had for this book.

My first view of the Kremlin, which Isadora had so often described to me, rose like the remembrance of a dream, from its surroundings—its glittering domes shining in the sunlight. When we arrived at the palace, now used as Isadora's school, the great doors were thrown wide and pouring down the broad marble staircase came a hundred of Isadora's children, all attractively dressed in red velvet tunics with narrow red velvet bands about their hair. They looked like

angels, and the agony that took possession of me, that I and not Isadora had come to them, was beyond endurance. Limp and helpless I leaned against the balustrade as the children gathered about me, almost carrying me up the stairs, making a speech that they had had prepared before our arrival. Then they cried, "But, Mary, you look out of the eyes like Isadora. You are like our Isadora."

A marvellous lunch had been prepared for us. Then, all the teachers, secretaries, in fact, all the personnel of the school, even the cook and maid, came in their charming Russian manner to greet Isadora's friend. The children begged me to relate all that happened to Isadora, and seating them all about me on the floor, I talked for hours, telling them all the beautiful things I could remember about Isadora—what she had told me about each one. There these lovely children sat, their beautiful spiritual faces uplifted towards me, drinking in the last news of their beloved teacher.

The six weeks I spent in the school will live forever in my memory. I realized Isadora was not dead, she lived on in this little group, and each day I impressed upon them the great fortune they had had, to be taught and inspired by the greatest dancer, and one of the most beautiful spirits of all times and that it was their sacred duty to carry on the work—that they in turn must teach other little children. I said, "This is the message I bring you from Isadora." They replied, "We will never forget, never."

Irma arranged many delightful performances, she and the children dancing all of the dances Isadora had taught them. One evening, the sixth anniversary of the Isadora Duncan School in Russia, the children wrote and put on a play giving the history of the school from its first hard days when they came little starving things, begging Isadora

to take them. Now, the talent, humor, and grace of even the tiniest ones were remarkable and I found it a most wonderful evening.

I made a contract with Irma to arrange with some American manager to bring them to America in 1928 or 1929. While in Russia, my health, which had always been perfect, began to fail, but I thought it was nothing but fatigue. Upon arriving in Paris, I could scarcely get up mornings and finally on receiving a cable that my young son had been operated on for appendicitis, I took the first boat to America.

Soon after my arrival I saw Mr. T. R. Smith, who asked me if I would do the second volume of Isadora's life or my life with her. I told him this was my dearest wish and I felt Isadora would have wanted me to write it, as no one else knew so well the truth and intimate details of the last years of her life, although they might be better qualified than I to portray them. By now my health was becoming alarming and I feared I would be unable to do any serious work. Almost immediately I broke down completely, the doctors despairing of ever curing me. Each day I grew weaker and weaker, until, towards the last, I could no longer move. It was believed the shock and strain of Isadora's death had brought on this condition.

Finally, I sent for Mr. Smith and told him I thought I had but a few months to live and that if he still wished me to do the book, I must start at once. He begged me to do so, and the very next day I was taken to the Memorial Hospital at 106th Street and Central Park West, where this book was written. Mr. Smith placed at my disposal a very capable and considerate secretary who was patient enough to sit idly for many hours until my pains would

subside, waiting until I felt strong enough to dictate the work. Many times we worked late at night, as time was growing very precious. There is much more I should have liked to mention, but I was unable to do so because of my great anxiety to finish while I could. But what is here written is the absolute truth and the last service I can render to the most loyal friend a woman ever had and a tribute to the greatest artist of her time.

THE UNTOLD STORY

ISADORA DUNCAN'S LIFE

1921-1927

CHAPTER I

ISADORA THE ARTIST

FROM far antiquity came Isadora bringing to moderns all the grace of movement, suppleness of body, charm and lightness of raiment, long sealed in the secret archives of sculptural Greece. Once in many cycles such a being is born and no matter in what earthly guise or in what form the message is delivered, it is always religious. No religious ceremony has ever moved its believers to a higher ecstasy than did Isadora's dance. I have seen men weep like children—women stifle the sobs that shook their very souls—young ballet dancers who came to scoff, sit pale and trembling at this miracle of art—and who that saw the dance recital Isadora gave in the East Side Yiddish Theatre in New York will ever forget the streaming eyes of the hundreds of Jewish women as she danced the Ave Maria?

This goddess in a poor frail human body, what glimpses of heaven she gave us through her pure inspiration and marvellous interpretations of art!

Her constant cry was—"Give me the worker, the artist, the poor, they understand. I am not an amusement for the rich. Give me my friends, the artists, for them I created and danced the Resurrection." And we who were privileged to see it felt our very souls sway in the profound spiritual light that streamed from her as she lifted our hearts to the throne of eternal redemption.

Her dancing has been described, praised, and explained

by artists in every language and each has written his own meaning, interpreting the inspiration he received from this marvellous source.

Rodin once said to us as we stood beside him, Isadora and I looking over his shoulder as he held up one after another, marvellous sketches of his masterpieces, "Now, what do you say that is?" And no matter what title we gave, he said, "Yes, yes, that's it. Whatever you find in it, that's it." He refused absolutely to tie a work down to any name and so I feel about Isadora's art, when I have been asked to explain it, because I have been so near, so constantly dazzled by the ever changing purity and beauty of it, that no words of mine could ever give the faintest hint of what it all meant, so I will insert a few articles of the many I have conserved, by those so much better qualified than I to express the meaning or describe Isadora's art.

The following is an excerpt from an article which Isadora loved, by her devoted friend, Mary Fanton Roberts:

"Such dancing as this is at its best out in the sunlight, with harp and flute and woodwind strains; yet so great is the magic of Isadora Duncan's dancing that, even in a modern theater, she makes you forget that you are hedged in by foolish walls, and with music and motion she carries you with her back to wild woods and the god Pan, with his flute and dancing nymphs, made with the sun and the wind and love.

"From the moment the orchestra begins and the folds of a green curtain part, and a figure clad in gauze of a sunlit hue or the gray of moonbeams or the azure of pale dawn blows past a background that gives the effect of a soft pale cloud-bank, 'the dull thoughts of to-day' drop away and the vision is filled with the great, majestic, simple beauty of

the dawn of years. If the Winged Victory could sway and bend from her high pedestal in the Louvre, the motion would be surely the same as that which Isadora shows us in the series of dances picturing 'Iphigenie en Aulide,' which she has created for the music of Gluck. And though Greek in effect, because we are accustomed to think of the most perfect dancing as Greek, and because there is no lovely frieze of pagan Athens that is not recalled, it is truly the natural dance of the world. There is such abundance and splendor of beauty in each different movement that the fecund strength of Earth herself, the worship of all gods, the gentle joy of all childish hearts, the glad welcome of all lovers, is there. Your heart beats and your eyes are moist, and you know that such perfect moments are years apart, even in happy lives. And then the figure melts back through the green folds and you remember that when Isadora danced in Paris the great artists and poets, unafraid of tears, wept and congratulated each other for such rare joy. It is most extraordinary—the impression this woman leaves with you even when the dance is over and the stage empty! You fancy a blue dome arching overhead, with glimmering stars to catch her eyes and sweet winds blowing all her draperies and flowers growing thickly for so light a foot to tread.

"You do not recall a single 'step' of all the dancing, for this woman of the hilltops has no practiced 'stunt' to remember and repeat. And there are no imitators of Isadora Duncan, because, as yet, there have been no other women to give their whole lives to seeing clearly what beauty means, to seeking it sincerely, to relinquish all that is not in harmony with Nature's simple, perfect ways. Isadora dances as she feels, and so to imitate her dancing would necessitate first of all the work and study that would enable one to

acquire her quality of calm, lucid thought and serene spirit, for one does not put on greatness with a smile after a term of lessons."

And this sensitive, understanding criticism by Yvette Guilbert, whom Isadora regarded as one of the finest French artists, pleased her beyond all others.

"Saturday she gave us proof of her genius at the Mogador Theatre. It was one of those rare moments of the season, Parisian,—ultra-artistic. For two hours it seemed good to be alive and aware of the souls of others. She who in her youth had revealed a lost art in reviving the 'Greek Art' in the bounding pagan nudity dear to the antique revellers of Cæsarian orgies had now revealed to us another lost art in her sculptural maturity.

"A sumptuous hour has struck. Isadora has become Gothic. Once a lascivious figurine, a bacchante, to-day she is a statuesque architected mass wrought in stone by the great 'primitives.' A Power, disconcertingly expressive and profoundly eloquent.

"Just a pair of arms, but with what a symphony of expression; a pair of arms which speak and epitomize all the thoughts in the orchestra. One sees arms, hands and shoulders, and one hears them sing. Yes, yesterday I heard them, actually heard them sing! It was a revelation!

"In her youth Isadora bounded and prattled. To-day she is eloquent, profound, overwhelming, sacred!

"Her art is unique and all the artists in Paris may learn something from her. For myself,—what things she suggests! Her first pagan dances were easily copied by a thousand slender young women, but her new 'Gothic' mood will not be so readily imitated, for the merciful silences of

her muscles were difficult to achieve. They are composed of a profound pensiveness that has in it something almost sacred. It is easy to be pagan, it is not so easy to be religiously divine.

"When Isadora had rendered the Ave Maria of Schubert, a Parisian lady in a box near mine murmured, overwhelmed, 'I am completely bowled over.' As for myself, I give you my word that I was choking with emotion. During the Funeral March of 'The Dusk of the Gods' I saw the immense and sublime figure of the Victory of Samothrace begin to march!

"Let's have done with the reiteration that one must be twenty and skinny to be a dancer. Dancing in the absolute and Greek sense signifies 'an expression of gentle sentiment and tragic passion.'

"We went to see 'Phèdre' dance and we found that the one-time priestess of Adonis and Aphrodite, Isadora Duncan, had become a gorgeous Gothic epitomized in stone.

"What a Mary of Nazareth at the foot of the cross you would be, Madame!

"Thank you for the splendid lessons you have given us. The ovation that will accrue to you will revive our courage as artists.

"Thank you, Madame, thank you."

CHAPTER II

HOW I MET ISADORA (1901-2)

IN January, 1901, after a disastrous runaway marriage and later divorce, I tucked my little year and a half old babe under my arm and started for Paris to study for the stage. This I did under the advice of Dr. Ziegfeld, Flo Ziegfeld's father, who had the Conservatoire of Music in Chicago. At this moment I had rather an extraordinary voice and, as I was scarcely more than a child myself, great things were hoped for from my Paris trip.

We arrived in Paris at ten o'clock at night and, not knowing anything about the hotels, I took a room at the Hotel Terminus, located just where the boat train arrives. Paris at this time, twenty-eight years ago, was not the Paris of to-day, and very few comforts and accommodations could be found, even at the first class hotels. I was given an immense room with a great canopied bed in which everything felt damp, the sheets, covers, and pillow cases, but I finally succeeded in having the hotel maid make a roaring fire in the fireplace and insisted that she air the linen in front of this.

As I had come without a maid or nurse, I had to take entire charge of my baby. So, asking the chambermaid to arrange a bath for us and not being able to leave the baby alone, I took him with me. You could not believe the distance the bathroom was from this bedroom. It seemed like half a mile, and then I was shown into an immense

room with a great marble bath in which a sheet had been draped. So uninviting and cheerless! Taking off my baby's night clothes and my own, together we got in this bath and never will I forget the shivery feelings I had and the baby was almost blue. Wrapping every towel I could find around him and myself, I dashed back to my room. By this time the maid had arranged the bed and we crawled in, shivering, I holding him tight to my breast trying to warm him. The maid, feeling sorry for us, got some hot bricks and put two or three of them into the bed.

By this time four or five of the passengers who had been most kind on the trip (especially old Mr. King) came flocking to my room, saying it was the night of the great Opera Ball, which is only held once a year and one of the greatest sights of Paris and nothing would do but that I get up and dress and go to see this ball. They gave the maid about a month's wages to stay and take care of the baby, who was by this time asleep, and she promised faithfully not to leave him for a second.

Off we went to this ball. Such a gorgeous, resplendent sight! Its equal I have never seen since. It was held at the Grand Opera and all the artists of Paris tried to outdo one another in magnificence and originality. In a few hours it became pandemonium and only with the greatest efforts did my escorts find me, as one Frenchman after another swept me off my feet, crying, "Oh, la belle Américaine, la belle Américaine." This was my first glimpse of Paris. We finally returned at four o'clock in the morning.

The next morning about ten o'clock I awoke to find my baby very restless and a little bit feverish. After breakfast, with its delightful chocolate, brioche and confiture, I

asked for an American paper, and looking through its columns found an advertisement saying "If you want rooms or apartments or anything, come to Donald Downey, 3 Rue Scribe."

I at once took a cab, my baby with me, and was so amused at the sight of the overstuffed cocher. He seemed to have five or six overcoats, one over the other, and talked a continual stream to his horse and to me, naturally none of which I understood. We arrived at 3 Rue Scribe which to-day forms the entrance to the Scribe Hotel, but at that time was a funny little office where three or four clerks headed by Donald Downey were leading Americans a merry chase in search of Paris homes.

I explained to Mr. Downey what I wanted—a room in a private family with a piano where I could study. He said he had just the very thing, but "My dear," he said, "you must come upstairs and meet my wife and have a cup of tea with us. There is the most delightful American lady with her at present, whom I am sure you will enjoy meeting."

He took me up a little spindly iron stairs which shot you immediately into the floor above the office, and on entering, he said to his wife, "My dear, here is a sweet little American with her baby. We must look after her." (This really meant taking everything you had if he could.) I had scarcely time to speak, before one of the most lovely women I have ever seen, tall and majestic, came over and wrapped her arms around me, saying, "Oh you darling! What is your name?" And I said, "Mary."

"Is this your baby?" Whereupon she took the baby out of my arms and we all sat down while Mrs. Downey poured

tea. "Why, Mary, you darling, I am going to take you both right home to Isadora."

Mrs. Duncan's suggestion did not fit in at all with Mr. Downey's plans, so he insisted upon taking me to the most marvellous rooms he said he had found. Mrs. Duncan, having just rented a studio from Mr. Downey, knew what an old fox he was and insisted upon accompanying us, much to my delight. We drove to the Rue de Douie in Montmartre which really meant nothing to me then, as I didn't know one quarter of Paris from the other.

The landlady had already been telephoned and she had prepared a bright fire and all the lights were gleaming in this very charming room which she showed us. This house had formerly been the home of a great writer and now was a sort of a school for fine literature, gymnastics and stage deportment. The room was a large back parlor with immense folding doors covered by heavy curtains shutting out the adjoining front room. I never questioned why the lights were lit so early in the day but after arranging and paying for a month's rent I went with Mrs. Duncan who was still holding my baby, to 45 Avenue de Villers. This was Isadora's studio.

After mounting the stairs Mrs. Duncan threw open the door with a great flourish, crying, "Isadora, Isadora, look what I have brought you, Mary and her baby."

Isadora and Raymond both ran forward, clasping me in their arms and dancing around in a circle as though I were some person they had been waiting for. At this moment, with a great flash of understanding, my heart went out to Isadora, and she still has it with her in eternity.

Isadora, Isadora, when the greatest writers and artists of the world have vied with one another to describe or por-

tray you, how can I with my poor stumbling pen dare to give even the faintest outline of your grace and unearthly beauty! You, an antique goddess reborn that man might again catch a glimpse of pure beauty, and for this daring act the gods have sent you heartaches and sorrows beyond the scope of human comprehension, and which you bore like a martyr.

Had I never suspected before your goddess origin, I should have sensed it one minute before your cruel death, when you, in perfect health, waved to us crying, "Adieu, mes amis. Je vais à la gloire!"

Your championship of all that was brave and heroic, your hatred of all hypocrisy and deceit, your courage and fortitude in openly and fearlessly blazing the path of woman and her right to bear children irrespective of man-made law!

How describe Isadora? Had I been ushered into Paradise and given over to my guardian angel, I could not have been more uplifted. Isadora was in her little dancing tunic, a colorless gauze of some sort, draped softly about her slender, ethereal form; her exquisite little head poised on her swan-like throat and tilted to one side like a bird, as though the weight of her auburn curls caused it to droop; a little retroussé nose that gave just the slightest human touch, otherwise I should have thrown myself on my knees before her, believing I was worshipping a celestial being. My head swam with ecstasy when a very nasal American voice brought me to earth. Raymond, who at this time was a beautiful, enthusiastic, charming young American, dressed like the young French artists of that time with loose flowing collar and great bow tie, and still wearing ordinary shoes, although he was beginning to occupy himself creating sandals.

There were several famous studios in this same building. Emma Eames had the one right in front of Isadora, and later, d'Annunzio's wife had the one above, from the window of which one day the dear lady threw herself to the pavement and I believe remained a cripple ever after.

Isadora and Raymond caught me by the hands and we all danced around in a ring, for all the world like little children, while Mrs. Duncan, seating the baby on the piano, gaily played some marvellous dance tunes. Here began the friendship which lasted all the rest of our lives. They all accompanied me back to the Rue de Douie.

As the baby began to be quite feverish, we called a doctor. The next morning upon throwing open the blinds, I found we were in a totally dark room. The windows were close up against a blank wall and not a particle of light or air could enter the room. This was one of Donald Downey's little jokes.

As the baby grew steadily worse and finally developed a terrible case of pneumonia, I believe I would have died had it not been for the comfort and consolation of the Duncans. I remember one day there were in consultation five doctors with beards of every color and description, red, gray, and black, standing around the bed. They shook their heads and looked so distressed, and I could not make out one word of their chatter. Finally beside myself, I dropped on my knees and begged God to leave me my baby, saying if he did, I would never again complain at any thing that might happen to me.

Shortly afterwards, Mrs. Duncan came with a bottle of champagne of which she gave the baby a spoonful and every few hours thereafter she repeated this. The next morning the baby opened his eyes and looked up at us both with the

sweetest smile in the world and she said, "Your baby is saved, Mary, but we must get him out of here."

There were two Armenian brothers who had the large adjoining front room and all day long they played a gramophone, which was then a very new toy. They would first speak into this thing which registered on a wax roll and a few hours later they would turn it on and you would hear this thing over and over again. They insisted that I sing into this funny horn and from then on they annoyed me very much by constantly coming to see me and playing this wretched, squeaky thing that I had sung, over and over.

I sent for Donald Downey and told him he must get me out of this place, to which he replied that he had a marvellous scheme. At 5 Avenue d'Antin, directly opposite the Grand Palace, there was a gorgeous, exquisitely furnished apartment to let. But I said, "I could never afford this."

"Oh yes, you can, for I have managed it all very beautifully. The apartment is so arranged that three or four families could live in it. The two Armenian brothers who are really very rich wish to leave here and they will pay two-thirds of the rent and Mr. King [my old friend from the boat] will take the back part of your apartment, so that you will really have a beautiful salon, marvellous bedroom, bath, dining-room and kitchen and it will cost you nothing but the price of a cook and butler."

Mrs. Duncan and I talked this over and thought it a wonderful idea. So we all moved to 5 Avenue d'Antin. I speak of this apartment because ten years later when Isadora had suddenly returned from South America and was joined by Elizabeth and all the children, she thought of this place and there I found her with her little golden haired

baby, jumping up and down in the bed, almost a replica of the little Preston, my baby, ten years before,—same furniture, same carpets, same beds—in fact, nothing changed but this lovely little child.

Isadora and her mother came to live with me in this apartment and for a few months we lived royally, not realizing that bills were piling up on every side. The Armenians continued to be most annoying, and one day one of them decided he was going to marry me and had brought for the occasion another brother and sister-in-law from Armenia. With great pride, he pointed to this lady who was covered with endless diamonds, pearls, rubies, and rare stones of all kinds (never have I seen such an array of jewels), and said, "See, that's what you will look like if you marry me."

Furious, I told him I had no intention of marrying any one, much less him. He said they were going to Monte Carlo for a week and when he returned, I would be forced to marry him. The little Armenian lady found a chance to be alone with Isadora and me and said, "Oh my dear, I beg of you not to marry this man. These brothers are the richest men in Armenia but they are savages and a woman is nothing but a slave to them. They cover you with jewels and gold, but they eat your heart out."

Isadora and I were terrified. We went to the studio and talked it over with Raymond. He said, "Donald Downey is an old skinflint and he has you in his clutches. As the concierge watches your every move, you will not be able to take one button out of the place. However, at twelve tonight, I will come with a cab and you throw your bags and everything out of the window." This we did. I don't know what the Armenian thought when he returned to find the

cage empty and many, many bills awaiting him. I was sorry for poor old Mr. King, but Raymond would not permit us to notify him so he could get out too, and I never heard of him afterwards.

Isadora and I went to the Palace Hotel and we laughed and giggled so much at the joy of escaping from this nightmare that a lady in the next room kept knocking at our wall, repeating that she was a lineal descendant of Edward II and her head shook and she could not be annoyed. This only made us giggle and laugh more. Finally she threatened to call the manager and report us, but we beat her to it. In a very plaintive voice, Isadora informed the manager by telephone that the lady next door was annoying us and we could not sleep. We soon heard some one knocking at her door and a great altercation going on.

Shortly after this Isadora and I returned to the studio to live, and Mrs. Duncan and the baby went down to Geverney, an ideal spot inhabited mostly by artists. Here Monet, the famous French painter and his family lived in an old-fashioned garden, adjoining the Moulin Rouge, our home. Frederick MacMonnies, the famous sculptor, also had a lovely place nearby, and we all lived the beautiful, simple, French life.

Isadora and I went there for week-ends. I remember one Easter Sunday when we climbed high in the hills and sat all day and listened to Isadora read Shakespeare and Shelley. Here was nothing but beauty and innocence.

Leon, the proprietor of the Moulin Rouge, had formerly been the MacMonnies' cook for years and had taken this little house in which to spend the rest of his life, accommodating a few congenial guests. In the morning he would appear with our steaming hot chocolate in bowls, not cups,

ISADORA DUNCAN, TEMPLE DUNCAN AND MARY DESTI
AT BAYREUTH (1904)

with great thick slices of peasant bread and a big pot of home-made jam. How we loved it and how happy we were!

At the same time I was also studying voice with the celebrated teacher Marchesi and stage deportment with an actor of the Comédie Française. Isadora always accompanied me to these lessons and encouraged me in every way. At this time Isadora knew nothing of love or lovers and I don't think the question of sex was ever mentioned between us. All was study and hard work. Isadora was to me like a beautiful rare flower, exquisite and fragile, whose only thought was her art.

We lived mostly at the studio and when my allowance of one hundred and fifty dollars, which seemed like a great fortune then, arrived the first of every month, we would move to the Hotel Marguerite or some other hotel and feast for as many days as our money lasted. Isadora's art was beginning to be greatly appreciated in Paris and once or twice a month she gave a recital in her studio to which all the élite among the intelligentsia of Paris came. Before each of these recitals some famous person would give a conference. At one time the Prince de Polignac, at another time the beloved Carrière, Besnard, Monet-Sully, and even the old tiger, Clemenceau. I remember the morning Isadora and I went to find him. His studio opened on a courtyard and as we bravely walked into his den, asking him if he would give a conference at Isadora's dance, he first roared with laughter at the idea of his speaking about the dance but he was charmed with the idea and did come very often, as also did his brother with his charming little Russian wife.

Parisian society of those days was like a fairy tale. Car-

rière or Besnard would take us on a Sunday morning with a group of their children through the Louvre or Luxembourg museum, pointing out to us the beauty of the works of the great masters. Afterwards we would all go to their homes to eat the simplest of repasts, glowing with happiness.

A very notable event happened at one of Isadora's recitals. While the conference was going on, Isadora was getting ready, putting on a costume behind a curtain which cut off the corner of the room which was used as a stage. Isadora wore very high laced gold sandals to dance. Even at this time she liked a little alcohol before the ordeal of dancing and as the glass of Hunter's rye slipped out of her hand, pouring into one of these sandals and smelling to heaven, we began to giggle and laugh, until try as we would, we could not get the sandals on. Finally the conference had finished and the music had started.

I grabbed the sandals, pushed them in a corner, and shoved Isadora on the stage barefoot. This was the first time that Isadora Duncan ever danced barefoot in her life and it created such a sensation, every one raving over the beauty of her feet, that she adopted this forever.

This evening Raymond was having a terrific struggle trying at one and the same time to allow people who had paid one hundred francs each to enter and to keep the concierge out, who was battering at the door to get his rent, and Raymond won.

After two years of this marvellous life my mother called me back to America where I married an old sweetheart—the kindest, truest friend a woman ever had—and I did not see Isadora for nearly three years, though constantly in communication with her.

CHAPTER III

OUR VISIT TO BAYREUTH (1904)

MY next trip to Europe took place a few years later. This time I sailed directly for Germany and immediately went to see Isadora, who was living at Hardenburg Strasse, Charlottenburg, one of the fashionable quarters of Berlin. Isadora did not expect me, and when I arrived shortly after lunch time, there was great rejoicing, and although every one wanted to talk to me at once, Isadora insisted upon taking me into her own room, where we could be alone. We left my baby and his nurse with Isadora's mother.

Dancing around in wild, mad delight, she said, "Oh, Mary, Mary, why didn't you tell me? Why didn't you tell me?"

"Tell you what?"

"Why didn't you tell me what love was?"

I was very much embarrassed, not quite knowing what she meant by this. "Oh you needn't blush," she said, "I know all about it. It is the most wonderful thing in the world. It will take me weeks to tell you about it. Budapest—Romeo—Love. Mary, we will never have any secrets from each other. To you I can open my heart. Here in the house, they are all furious with me. Now I know the meaning of things, music, dancing, everything seems different since the revelation of love. I was born for love."

Swirling around the room she clasped some flowers that

were in a vase and entwined them in her curls. She then danced like mad to show me the difference. "I am no longer a little innocent maiden such as you left behind, but a full blown Bacchante." And she truly looked like one.

"Oh, how glad I am that you came. To-morrow we will go to Bayreuth. Just the two of us. Preston and his nurse can come on later with mother and Temple."

There was a great fête that evening and Mrs. Duncan, who always loved me, pulled out all my hairpins and let a great mass of black curls envelop me like an Indian. We never went to bed until early morning. Even then Isadora kept repeating, "Mary, wait until I tell you, wait until I tell you all about it." So she did, but there is no need for me to tell it, as she has told you so much better than I ever could, in her own book.

At dinner that night Isadora had insisted that I put on a pair of her gold sandals and a Grecian dress, and presenting me with a lovely blue Indian Kashmir shawl, she said, "To-morrow, we will get two white capes and our costumes will be complete. I will never allow you to return to that bourgeoise life of high heeled shoes and fashionable clothes. Promise me you will send all your trunks away, and don't keep a stitch of your old things."

All this delighted me, as I had had three years of conventional life in Chicago and longed for our old simple way of living. So, dressed in loose flowing garments, blue shawls, and white capes, with bare feet and gold sandals, we started the next day for Bayreuth looking like twins. The first time Frau Wagner saw us, she said, "Isadora, I thought you were one, but you are two." Then, noticing our sandals and Grecian gowns, she asked, "But, Isadora,

do all Americans dress like you?" To which Isadora replied, "Oh no, some wear feathers."

Frau Wagner invited us to a reception, expecting us to come in evening clothes, but much to her surprise, we arrived wearing sandals and loose flowing crépe dresses with exquisite crepe shawls instead of the usual woollen ones of the daytime. This was our costume during the entire six months we spent in Bayreuth.

Bayreuth, Bayreuth, dreams and illusions! They say that Wagner's music is the only music mad people will listen to, and I can well believe it, for truly it carries one away beyond reality.

Isadora and I arrived in Bayreuth in May, laughing, singing, and dancing! Isadora was the spirit of youth, and I believe this was the great bond between us. All the vagabonds, tramps, artists,—in fact all people who have nothing to do with years, who count each day by its sunshine, belong to this group. Only, Isadora added to this her genius. From the day of our arrival we were taken to the bosom of the Wagner family, and all their circle. We lived Wagner's music; we ate, slept, breathed, and dreamt it; all outside of it slipped away from our consciousness. Here were no trammels, no conventions, only youth.

All the kings, princes, grand dukes, and other personages whom we met daily seemed quite naturally a part of the picture, and as we were also part of it there was nothing strange in our living on the most familiar and intimate terms with them. We called each other by our Christian names, or some fanciful pagan title, and at once, as if by magic, we took on the character of the part. All

this came about so simply, so spontaneously. It could not have been otherwise.

Early each morning we drove in a funny little, old-fashioned one-hoss shay, miles up to what Isadora always called the Little Red Barn on the hill. This was the famous Wagner Theatre. Here we met other devotees and soon scattered throughout the dark theater in groups of twos or threes or fours. We sat daily for four or five hours, holding each other's hands as in a dream for fear of being carried away beyond all coming back.

Months passed in this way, listening to the first rehearsals, Tannhauser, the Ring, and Parsifal. No one but those taking part was ever allowed within the sacred precincts of that theater during rehearsals. I was there because Isadora and I were never separated, I watching her performance and occasionally dancing her part with the two German ballet dancers while she watched with Frau Wagner from the auditorium. This went on for months, until Isadora found her part perfected. One day an extraordinary thing happened, which had much to do with my relinquishing dreams of the stage. I danced Isadora's part in the Three Graces with the two young German ballet dancers, when Frau Wagner most enthusiastically remarked so all could hear her, "Wie schön, but how she resembles you!"

Isadora flew on the stage, shaking me by the two shoulders; "Don't ever do it again," she cried. "Never, never."

I was so astonished I could scarcely breathe. All the way home she kept repeating, "It's awful, even the very expression of my eyes. No, I will never teach any one again. They only succeed in making an imitation of me."

That ended my dancing, and it also ended my stage

career. The next day all was forgotten. I asked Isadora a few days before her death whether she remembered the scene and she said she didn't remember it at all.

Our beloved Bayreuth; our land of kings and fairies, real and imaginary, where all was beautiful, and where all left their conventional trappings at the threshold, and clothed themselves in the mists and draperies of Wagner's music.

The dear little King and Queen of Württemberg, like toy royalty, played their part in this wonderful dream world. The great Hans Richter and his wife, whom we all called Aunt, the brilliant Frau Thode, the daughter of Frau Wagner, whom Isadora always met with, "Well, where's our spiritual husband, the adorable, sensitive, Heinrich Thode?" Then Siegfried, Frau Wagner's son, whom she regarded as a ray from heaven. He was like a satyr, bounding about from place to place, never still, always laughing.

There was also that splendid musician, the Ab-Princess of Meiningen, the sister of the ex-Kaiser. I remember one morning we expected her to breakfast, but breakfast to us meant breakfast, not lunch. After long waiting, Isadora told the servant to serve coffee. Just as we had each sugared and creamed our coffee to suit our individual taste, we heard horses prancing up the road, and saw the dashing blue and white Imperial plumes waving gaily on the horses' heads. Without a second's hesitation we all poured our coffee back in the pot and told John, our much overworked and now thoroughly scandalized butler, to heat it up quickly, for her Royal Highness was arriving.

She came dancing in, throwing aside her fashionable hat and cloak, saying, "Quick, quick, give me sandals and a tunic like yours. I will not be dressed differently."

By this time the coffee was hot again, and I think no one noticed its cloudy aspect. After breakfast the Princess sat at the piano and played for hours, while we sat around like children, listening to her music. If there is one thing in my life that I am more thankful for than all others, except my son, then it is Bayreuth, the joy and sheer beauty of its unreality will live with me forever. When we heard Frau Wagner's carriage coming down the road, knowing her worship for her son, we would throw ourselves on our knees before his picture, and she and Siegfried would walk in and find us so. This caused great merriment. One always walked into our house (which was called "Phillip's Rest" and formerly the hunting lodge of King Ludwig), for there was no lock, nor bar, nor bell, nor key. In fact I never remember the great door being closed. What picnics we had in the Hermitage gardens! Truly poor mad King Ludwig, the man who built it, left his spirit there. One couldn't be sane and live within its beautiful boundaries. There we sat on the grass eating sausages and drinking beer, tasting like nectar from Valhalla.

So brilliant and marvellous was the wit and conversation that was tossed like a toy balloon from one to the other, or sometimes more serious thoughts scintillated like flashes of flame between two great minds! All of the finest musical talent of the world had been selected with great care by Frau Cosima, and one often heard her sharp characteristic laugh as she sat like a queen at the head of these gatherings.

Perhaps Isadora's utter disregard of all conventions dated from this, taking only her own standard of right, truth and beauty as her future guide.

One night an amusing incident happened. We were ex-

ISADORA DUNCAN, MARY DESTI AND DR. H. VON BADY AT BAYREUTH (1904)

pecting our friend King Ferdinand of Bulgaria and his suite to a midnight supper but Romeo, Isadora's first lover, whom she had not seen for a long time, and really whom she scarcely wished to see again, in any sentimental way, had arrived but two days before.

Isadora was incapable of hurting any one, and would suffer any inconvenience herself rather than hurt another. (I have known her to go away from home for several weeks because of some unsympathetic guest whom she had not the heart to send away.) So she had given Romeo hospitality, insisting however that he must live up in the Hermitage Gardens in a private hotel, where Isadora's mother, Isadora's niece Temple and my young son and their governesses all lived, our little pavilion being very small.

The night of the supper for King Ferdinand we tried to get rid of Romeo, but he felt something in the air, and being a wild Hungarian, refused to be cajoled into going home. Finally we pretended to be sleepy and sent him off. No sooner had he gone than we began to arrange the house, covering everything with cushions and flowers and bits of lovely silk, laughing hysterically at what a joke or tragedy it might be if Romeo should decide to return. Isadora grew pale at the thought. We closed the doors and windows tight, so that the light might not be seen.

Everything was ready, the table loaded with every delicacy of the season, which we had taken great pains to hide from Romeo, and the candles burned brightly. Midnight was long past, and no king and no company, and horror of horrors, our candles were burning down, and we had none to replace them. I blew many out, leaving only three burning, to save the others, and then suddenly there was a great

clatter of horses' feet, high voices and laughter, and our royal party entered.

King Ferdinand was the first, but before he greeted any one, he gave a cry, grasped my hand, pointing tragically to the three burning candles, "Oh my dear, it's the sign, it's the sign.—Put them out! Quick! Quick!"

Without thinking of lighting the others, I at once blew them all out. This caused great laughter and amusement. Immediately his court all lit matches and at the same instant almost four candles were lit. Soon there were dozens burning and the festivities began.

Ferdinand, who was known for his long, thin, fine nose, soon began to twitch this appendage, saying, "I smell something. Surely I smell something." And sure enough, there was a most peculiar smell. As it was the first time we had ever closed the doors and windows we had never noticed it before, or perhaps because that day was the first time we had opened the trap door to the cellar, which was still slightly open. We now opened all the windows wide, so during supper it was not so bad, but still the King suffered from it.

After rigid investigation, the next day we discovered that the peasants who had formerly inhabited the house had buried a hundred cheeses in the cellar. They may have been delicious to taste, but they certainly could send forth a great odor.

Never was there such a gay, happy party! Ferdinand was brilliant! We had splendid French champagne which delighted him, for he usually had to drink German champagne which he detested.

Every now and then there was a peculiar noise of some one throwing gravel or small stones at the window. In fact, one

or two of these little stones flew in, striking Isadora on the back of the head. She ignored it but suggested as it was a lovely moonlight night that we all go into the Hermitage garden where she would dance for us. There were great cheers and bravos, slightly interrupted by a shower of gravel this time, which Isadora explained the peasants sometimes threw simply from an excess of happy spirit.

We went to the garden, Isadora taking a different route. Here and there we caught sight of Isadora's white robe tearing hither and thither between the trees. Again Ferdinand had a nervous paroxysm, crying, "It's the vision of the white lady. It always appears in our family before a great catastrophe. Surely you must know the legend."

But I knew it was Isadora, and the dark shadow leaping after her, Romeo. She finally joined us again and danced till dawn, when our guests departed.

CHAPTER IV

HELGOLAND AND VENICE; MY DEPARTURE FOR AMERICA (1905)

TOWARDS the end of our stay in Bayreuth Isadora was seized with a mad longing for the sea. She felt she couldn't breathe, work, or even exist unless she saw her beloved sea. It always gave the breath of life to her and, as Romeo was about to depart, she thought it would be a very sweet act to show him an island of which she had raved a great deal, Helgoland.

So Isadora, Romeo, and I, with Temple and Preston, fled one day from Bayreuth to Berlin and Hanover and thence by boat to Helgoland. Isadora, as a joke, had told the two children to call Romeo "Papa" and her "Mama," and me "Aunt Mary." I think she did this just to amuse the children and keep them quiet as we had no maids with us, but it proved very embarrassing before the end of the trip. Many of the passengers would speak to Romeo as he walked the deck with the two children, remarking on the beauty and the unusual way in which they were dressed, as they also were in bare feet with sandals and little Grecian dresses.

Once while Romeo was talking to a group of people, the two children ran up and in the most fiendish manner screamed together, "He isn't our Papa, and she isn't our Mama. We're just pretending." From then on people eyed us most suspiciously, believing we had kidnapped the children.

The wonderful island of Helgoland rose out of the sea like

ISADORA DUNCAN BEFORE THE BIRTH OF HER FIRST CHILD, HOLLAND (1905)

a dream. Its sides were dug out all around from the fierce waves of the northern sea and we wondered how on earth we could ever get up on the plateau, but as the boat swung around, we found a little port, and from there we mounted jauntily up to the most ravishing little city in the world. Here were people in their quaint full skirts and great bonnets, who had never seen anything but the sea. They were nearly all fisherfolk but with the kindliest faces and all so happy and merry, just as though they had some great joke on the rest of the world. Realizing that it was possible that this island might at any moment be lost in the sea, as there was nothing whatever to protect it, we marvelled at the philosophy of these happy people.

The next day Isadora wished to go swimming, so we were taken over to a tiny, flat, sandy island with only one house on it, a sort of very simple hotel and restaurant. Isadora declared this was the most charming place she had ever seen and the most healthful, and we would leave the children there in charge of the good housewife, while we returned to Helgoland to bring back our necessary baggage.

We left intending to return immediately, but after dinner Isadora decided we would delay our journey until the next day, as Romeo was leaving and we wished to spend the last evening with him. But about nine or ten o'clock that night, the most terrible storm came up, and when we inquired about the little island, people said, "Oh, that's nothing. Everything is washed away from there, every now and then."

But we screamed that we had left our children there, to which they replied, "Maybe the hotel will stand." We remembered how flimsy and barrack-like the hotel had looked, and as there was no way of getting in communication with it at all, we went to the beach and begged the old fishermen

to take us over in one of their boats. They declared they would not as it was impossible. "No one could live in such a sea," they said. And now filled with terror, Isadora and I so pleaded with them that the life guards said they would take us. Jumping in a boat we were soon bounding through the terrific waves.

When we reached the little island we dashed to the hotel and found the two children, faces peering out of the window, terrified, waiting for us to come and get them. We threw our wraps and capes about them, I holding Preston, and Isadora Temple, and started back. The life guards declared that at any moment the whole island might be washed away. I can still feel that icy water as the angry waves broke over us, drenching us to the skin. A tremendous crowd of fisherfolk awaited us as we came in, cheering and lending a hand. The children were put to bed, after being given hot tea and whiskey, and we sat the rest of the night waiting for daylight, when we kissed Helgoland a fond farewell and returned to Bayreuth.

Here we found everybody in a nervous state, as we had not announced our going away. Doctor Von Bary, the famous tenor and my devoted admirer, declared that Bayreuth had lost all its vim and that he had not been interested in anything. The night after our arrival, he sang Parsifal, and Isadora invited him to come in after to a champagne supper.

Von Bary, who was an immense German, fully six feet three inches tall, but very fat and puffy, and not altogether sure of his legs, was a marvellous artist. When he told at supper of how dreadful he had felt that we had gone away without him, tears stood in his eyes. This so touched Isadora that she decided I was the great love of Von Bary's

life and that she could not dream of my returning to respectable New York. Von Bary and I must elope.

At this announcement Herr Von Bary looked a bit surprised but Isadora remarked there was no time like the present, declaring that this was the night of all nights. I facetiously remarked that I would not elope without my new dressing case which had just been presented to me. It seemed to weigh half a ton, as all the brushes and toilet requisites were made of solid ivory and the bottles of heavy cut glass.

"Very well," said Isadora, "you shall take your dressing case." So, returning from my room, she handed this heavy load to Von Bary, as the servants were gone; there was no way to get a carriage and we had to tramp the five miles to Bayreuth before we could get a train. Isadora and I were laughing hysterically but poor Von Bary, who is very near-sighted and as I said before, not very steady on his legs, and after having sung that evening the tremendous rôle of Parsifal, was anything but an enthusiastic eloper. Before he had gone half a mile, he put down the heavy suitcase, saying, "Dass kann ich nicht. Dass kann ich nicht." This caused me to roar with laughter. Isadora said, "I shall be your bridesmaid, carrying your trousseau," and putting this heavy thing on her head, she trudged the whole way to Bayreuth Station.

We all arrived in an exhausted, hot, dusty, unenthusiastic condition, and just as we reached the steps of the railway station, we saw the receding lights of the five o'clock train which we had just missed. Von Bary with a joyful gasp threw himself on the steps and said, "Gott sei dank, jetz kann ich ein glass bier haben," and here ended the great romance of Sigmund and Siglinda as Von Bary and I were

called by everybody except Frau Wagner, who always called me Kundry.

We had breakfast at a nearby restaurant and met Von Bary's old servant who had been looking all over town for him, saying his mother was wild with fright and worry, believing some accident had happened to him.

Isadora and I, with the heavy suitcase, now took a carriage and drove gleefully home, looking for some new adventure to amuse us.

Shortly afterwards the season closed and Isadora and I left for Venice. She declared she would never let me return to America until I had seen the wonders of Italy. It was her mania to share with her friends all the beautiful things which she had ever enjoyed in life. We arrived at Florence one night at midnight when the whole town was bathed in gorgeous moonlight. Isadora instructed the man to take our baggage to the Hôtel de l'Europe, after which she, Preston, and I danced gaily through the deserted streets, over Dante's bridge, singing at the top of our voices, "I am the Romeo. I am the Romeo. I am the Romeo who won Juliet. I am the Juliet. I am the Juliet. I am the Juliet who loved Romeo."

About two in the morning we returned to our hotel and went to sleep. The next day we went on to Venice where my American husband was coming over to meet me. We took a gondola and went directly to the Lido, which at this time was a sandy, bare island with one small hotel and a beautiful beach covered with little bathing shacks. Here we romped about all day, in and out of the sea, dancing like mad, but when we returned to the hotel at night, we found that Preston had a very bad case of croup and was almost choking. Isadora volunteered to go to Venice for a doctor.

MARY DESTI AND HER SON PRESTON. CHICAGO (1904)

As she left the hotel a gigantic young fisherman, who seemed to have followed us all day, declared to her that he was in love with her, that he had never seen any one so beautiful and madonna-like, that if necessary he would take her by force to his mother and marry her. Isadora was terribly frightened and begged him to help her first get a doctor and then she would see about it. He made her promise that she would marry him and as he looked so violent, she was terrified and promised.

In an hour she came back with the doctor and I was standing on a chair beside the bed, because a whole troupe of mice had shot out from under the mattress and were scampering all over the floor.

A few days afterwards, my husband arrived and you can imagine what this poor man suffered to find his very elegant young wife now arrayed in bare feet with sandals, declaring she would never wear anything else again in the world. To which he replied, "What will you do in Chicago with the cold lake winds?" I said that it would not matter, for I had adopted these clothes for life. So, very gently, without showing any chagrin at all, we put Isadora on the train for Berlin and we took ours for Paris.

We arrived in Paris in a terrific rain storm, and as the water splashed through our sandals, I must admit my son and I looked very bedraggled and anything but artistic at our very fashionable hotel.

My dear kind husband told me I had "carte blanche" in Paris to buy what I liked if I would only be good enough to confine my Grecian clothes and sandals to the house.

We sailed for home and I did not see Isadora again for several years, but when I did, it was when I finally came to Paris to remain permanently and when she and I were in-

separable; every event of her life was entwined with mine.

Isadora in "My Life" has told her own story from then on to 1921, in so beautiful a manner that for another, even a most intimate friend, to add to it anything except a few overlooked, yet very interesting details, would be insolently gratuitous.

CHAPTER V

DEATH OF ISADORA'S CHILDREN (1913)

AT different periods of her life Isadora was troubled with hallucinations and she was strangely influenced by evil omens and curses. A very famous cinema vamp had come to Paris with a relative of Isadora's and Isadora, believing in this man's genius and that artists should always be free (and especially as he was in a bad nervous state owing to this girl being a spiritualist and doing the queerest and weirdest things at all times), felt that his only salvation was in getting away. So one Sunday morning she saw him off to Moscow. Then, feeling she must look after the girl, came to me to help her out of the dilemma and see the girl for her. I absolutely refused to do this. She then asked me if I would go with her, which I did.

I have never seen Isadora at any time more uncomfortable than she was at this meeting. Being very tender-hearted, the last thing she wanted in the world was to hurt any one. She did not tell her at once what had happened but asked her to drive with us and to go to lunch. On the way to the studio, however, she finally broke the news that he had gone.

Well, if this cinema star ever gave a performance before the camera as she did this day, she would be unequalled in the world. Isadora and I sat in the back seat and she sat in the front seat. Rising to her feet, majestically, she screeched, "You have taken my mate from me. What about my child?"

At this Isadora was dumbfounded, saying she never knew anything of a child, but she said, "If this is true, you will come with me and I will take care of you and your child." (The truth of the matter was that there never was a child.)

The future cinema star arose and in a voice trembling with hate, said, "I curse you. The gods of my fathers curse you and your children forever." And at that very instant we were on the spot where years afterward the automobile with Isadora's children entered the Seine. Many, many times after the tragedy Isadora would ask me if I believed in curses.

A few nights before the death of her children, she had been dining at my house with Harold Spencer, Lord Alfred Douglas, Professor Cornelius and several other people. She suggested we all return to the studio at Neuilly as she wanted Lord Douglas to see the babies.

The studio was rather gloomy and as we entered, Isadora, shivering, said to me, "Did you see anything pass just then, before the curtain?" And I said, "No."

She continued, "Three black cats ran across there." So we all got up to chase them but there were no black cats. Isadora said: "That is most extraordinary. I believe I am losing my mind. I saw those cats distinctly. Not only did I see those three black cats run after one another, but last night I saw three tremendous black birds fly across there."

Some one answered that it was her nerves and she ought to see a doctor. She said it affected her most strangely, so she would leave and go to Versailles. She would not sleep any more in this studio. Perhaps it was the immensity of it.

Lord Alfred, who had already seen the children, slipped out with Spencer without saying a word to any one and, being a recent convert to Catholicism and much upset by

these visions of Isadora, went to the children's bedroom and baptized them both. I don't know whether Isadora ever knew of this or not. I never liked to mention it to her. In fact I was only told of it myself several days afterwards. Later that night, as Isadora was in this terrible nervous state, we took a car and went to Versailles.

Then the night before the awful tragedy Isadora and I drove down to Versailles and while we were having our usual supper, cold chicken, salad, and a bottle of champagne, Isadora told me of a book some one had sent back stage to her that night after the performance and it made her very melancholy. It was "Niobe Lamenting Her Children," and she could not imagine why any one had sent her this book.

The next morning we were up bright and early, little Patrick pretending he was a man, trying to hold my coat for me, and Deirdre, like an angel, dancing and singing all over the place. I have never seen Isadora so happy or tender as she was this morning. As we drove into town, Isadora dropped me at my place, 4 Rue de la Paix, she taking the children to dine with Lohengrin.

About four o'clock Miss Amy Barton called and asked me if I would accompany her to see an apartment with an immense balcony along the Seine. For months I had been trying to get such an apartment, so we took a cab and went across the river. It had begun to rain, heavy, drizzling, dirty sort of rain. We mounted to the second floor and Miss Barton going on the balcony called to me to come and see the river. She said she had never seen it in such a state before. I stepped out beside her and we must have stood there fascinated by the sight of this usually placid, clear Seine now rushing and tearing and looking almost like

melted mud. It depressed me so and filled me with melancholy, I told Miss Barton, "I could never live here as the Seine has such a terrible effect on me." She said, "But you have been trying to get this apartment for months and you have always wanted to live by the Seine."

I replied, "I don't know what it is, but for God's sake, let's get out of here. I am going mad. I can't endure it another moment."

We took a cab, returning to my house, where my secretary ran out screaming, "Quick, quick, you must go to Isadora's immediately. They have been telephoning like mad for the last half hour."

My reply was, "I am not going out." I knew she intended having the Queen of Naples there for tea and I supposed she just wanted me to come and I was feeling very blue and depressed, I didn't want to go. Just then the telephone rang again, and Elizabeth said, "Tell Mme. Desti to come immediately, immediately. It is most urgent."

Miss Barton and I went next door to the Mirabeau Hotel and had some tea. I thought that would relieve this feeling of chill and horror that had come over me. A woman passed with a large basket of lilacs and I bought some of them, giving Miss Barton half to carry, while I carried the rest, starting for Isadora's, thinking the lilacs would cheer us up.

When I arrived at the gates of her studio, 68 Rue Cheveaux, I saw an immense crowd, policemen, and terrible excitement. I thought, "Oh, she's having a great party," and Miss Barton and I pushed our way through the crowd. As we were about to enter the door, the cook came and threw herself on her knees, grasping me, crying, "Oh, Mme. Desti,

Mme. Desti, the children, the children, something terrible has happened to the children."

I pushed her aside, showering her with the lilacs I had been holding up to this moment. Breathless I ran up the stairs to Isadora's room. She was standing in the middle of the room with Lohengrin's arms around her and stretching her arms to me, said, "Mary, tell me it isn't true, it isn't true. My children are not dead."

"Of course, they're not," I said, not knowing what had happened. To which Lohengrin said, "Don't lie to her. It is not the time for that."

"Oh, Mary doesn't know, doesn't know what happened," said Isadora. At this, Elizabeth grabbed me by the arm and drew me into the next room. "Mary, for God's sake, don't lose your head. Try to control yourself. Isadora needs every ounce of love and courage we have." She continued, "The babies are drowned, Mary; in the Seine."

"Tell me, Elizabeth, where are they, quickly?"

"They have just been taken to the American Hospital."

I tore down the stairs and, like a lunatic, parted the dense crowd at the doors and ran the two blocks to the hospital. It was dusk when I got there and, without knowing where I was going, I ran into the first little house I met, which happened to be the morgue. There on a little white marble slab on one side of the room were our two little angels. I bent over them. I tried to suck their breath, to draw air into them, not believing they were dead, when a voice behind me said, "It's too late. We have done everything."

Looking across at the other side of the room I saw a sight that has filled all the rest of my life with a nightmare. There was the poor little English nurse and imprinted on her face and staring open eyes and wide open mouth, the

horror of the whole tragedy. As the automobile in which all three were drowned was entirely closed, it must have taken some time before it filled with water and the nurse holding the two children to her breast tried to cover them with rugs, and she, poor thing, must have sat there staring at the slowly approaching death. I went over and covered her face with a handkerchief so that none other might have this terrible shock.

Like all things that happened to Isadora, this accident was unique. Such a disaster had never happened before. Isadora had just kissed the children good-bye, piling rugs and covers over their knees to keep them warm, when less than a minute later, the chauffeur in turning the corner encountered a taxi. To avoid an accident he put on the brakes but as the other car passed he found he couldn't start without getting out to crank the car. So without putting on le point mort he opened the door and descended, closing the door after him. Then he went to the front of the car and turned the manivel.

The car gave a lurch and bounded straight into the river not ten feet away. It seemed he made a spring for the running board, but the door being closed, he could not get a hold. Then instead of calling aloud for assistance, he threw himself on the pavement, beating his head madly.

Others who had seen the accident ran quickly to their assistance but, owing to the swiftness of the rushing water, the car was carried a little ways down stream and it took some time to locate it and lift it out. The nurse was holding the two darling children to her breast, trying to cover them to keep the water from reaching them and both children were still warm when rescued. For a time there was some hope of saving Patrick.

ISADORA DUNCAN WITH PATRICK AT NICE (1909)

Horrid stories were passed about Paris, saying that the jealous woman, who had once tried to stab Lohengrin, had paid the chauffeur to get rid of the children. After many months elapsed this horrible tale was told to Isadora, which, I think, added the last thorn to her crown.

Immediately after the tragedy, she sent for the chauffeur, who was being held by the police and as the poor fellow knelt prostrate before her, she said, "Don't grieve any more. I know no human being could commit so horrible a crime. It's something way beyond poor human tragedy. Return to your children. I wouldn't harm a hair of your head."

Upon returning to the studio from the American hospital where the children's bodies were I found Isadora sitting like one in a trance, giving orders unconsciously about everything. One of the first things she said was, "We must notify Ted at once. It will break his heart." She asked me had I seen the babies and was there any hope and I told her, "No, none."

Later in the evening, Gaston Calmette, the editor of the *Figaro*, and devoted friend, and one of the most beautiful characters I have ever known (and who incidentally was most tragically shot a few years after by the wife of Caillaux), came to the studio, folding Isadora in his arms and said, "Isadora, command me in any way, in any way. Let me be of some help to you."

Isadora replied, "No, there is nothing, nothing, nothing to do."

I then asked Isadora if she would like the children brought home and she said she would. I said: "Mr. Calmette can be of great help to us because otherwise it will be impossible." So, Calmette and I went to the Chief Coroner, and after tremendous difficulties we got permission to bring

the children home, which is against such laws in France, as after an accident they should have remained at the morgue.

About eleven o'clock their little bodies were brought home. I had already prepared a couch downstairs in the library, where I arranged and dressed them, combing and curling their golden locks. There they lay, hand in hand like two smiling angels.

Going upstairs I asked Isadora if she would like to see them. Like a stone image, with Augustin on one side and me on the other, she came down the long stairs to her immense studio, and as we entered the library, oh, so gently, so gently, she knelt beside them, taking their little hands in hers, and with a cry that has pierced my heart ever since, whispered, "My children, my poor little children."

We lifted her very gently and she returned upstairs.

About five o'clock the next morning I looked out of the window and found that the garden had been transformed. Hundreds of students from the Beaux Arts had gathered all the white flowers they could find in Paris and had covered all the trees and bushes until the garden looked like a veritable fairyland. So natural did it look that it might have grown overnight.

Going into the garden, I noticed a man in a heavy brown cape and his head bent forward with his hat slouched over his eyes, and walking up and down, up and down. People who were there said he had done that all night long. I went over to him and recognized at once Bourdelle, France's great sculptor. With tears streaming from his eyes, I brought him in to Isadora. Throwing himself on his knees and putting his head in her lap, she looked at him as the Mother of God might have looked. All through that day with the different people coming to her, she seemed to be

trying to console them. I can't explain just what it was. She was in the most exalted state, as though some great spirit of pity had taken possession of her and she was sorry for the whole world. Truly, to have seen Isadora in such moments was to have known what a great being she was.

At this time neither she nor I ever lay down nor changed our clothes. We remained just as we were the hour of the accident, until after the funeral. Many people told me afterwards they thought it strange that Isadora had worn her brown dress, hat and veil and that there was no trace of crépe or mourning.

During the impressive funeral service, with Colonne and his orchestra, Isadora knelt at the railing of the studio, looking down at the three white caskets, Patrick, Deishia and their devoted English nurse whom Isadora wished should be buried in exactly the same manner as her two little children—as she had died with them—holding my hand tightly, saying, "No tears, Mary—no tears. They never had a sorrow, and we must not be sorrowful to-day. I want to be brave enough to make death beautiful, to help all the other mothers of the world who have lost their babies."

As the funeral procession wended its way to the cemetery, Isadora, Elizabeth and I sat in one carriage and no word was spoken all the way, except for Isadora saying, "No tears, Mary, no tears." By some horrible mismanagement on the part of some one, we arrived at the crematory while another funeral was in progress and we had to enter the basement of the chapel.

And there we stayed, as it was impossible to wait home until the other funeral services were over in the chapel above. Some one decided the ceremony of burning the three dear

bodies must take place at once, so then the whole performance took place before our very eyes.

The gruesomeness of it all is beyond description, for there the caskets were inserted in the ovens to the horror of every one. Isadora looked like gray marble and while there were several orations, I turned to her and begged her to leave. Then, looking more like death than life, and leaning on Augustin's arm, we left the crematory. She and I alone left the cemetery before the ceremonies were over. I think she would have died had we stayed another instant. I said, "Isadora, will you come to my house and rest?"

"No, I have a great mission to do. I must go to Lohengrin."

Lohengrin had been taken ill immediately after the tragedy and was in Doctor Doyen's Hospital. Isadora and I were shown up to his room and Isadora, standing over his bed, tried in her gentle way to console him.

Isadora insisted upon returning to the studio and sat for hours just looking into space. Later the others returned and noticing a terrible restlessness about Isadora and fearing what she might do, possibly try to jump into the Seine, I asked Raymond not to leave her, but not to let her know; that he was to follow us if she insisted upon going out. About twelve o'clock she started to leave, begging me not to accompany her. I told her I would die if she would leave me. I could not possibly stay alone. I must go with her.

"Very well, then, Mary, come, but you must let me decide for myself." We went out and she sat gazing for a long time into the waters of the Seine, Raymond following us unnoticed. Then up and down, in one street and out another, for two hours she tore along at a terrific pace. Finally putting her arm about me, she said, "Mary, I've

decided to see it through. Nothing matters to me now but maybe I can help others." We returned to the studio and as neither of us had had a wink of sleep for over three days, we threw ourselves on the bed just as we were, Isadora sobbing very quietly. I put my arm under her head, and in a short time she slept. So fearful was I of waking her, that I dared not move my arm which was horribly cramped. To get my mind off this, and trying to ignore it, I thought I'd concentrate on Lohengrin, whom, in spite of being very ill, I was very angry with, although I don't know why I should have been. I felt that I sent my spirit out of my body and hovering over him in his hospital bed, I said "Come to Isadora. You ought to come to Isadora. You ought to come and help Isadora. She needs you. Come, get up and dress."

I don't know how long this kept up, but at five o'clock in the morning, I heard the outer gate open and footsteps crunch on the gravel. I knew it was Lohengrin, and that my prayer had been answered and that he had come to save Isadora.

I very gently slipped my arm from under Isadora's head and met him on the steps, his face alight with such beauty that he looked like a god. Without a word I passed him and went out, returning to my own home, knowing he was the only person who could console her.

CHAPTER VI

WAR TIME EXPERIENCES (1914)

BY a strange coincidence I happened to be the first volunteer in the great world war. Isadora and I had left Bellevue and were again living at the Crillon Hotel and I went to my perfume studios at 4 Rue de la Paix every day.

This perfume business was very amusing. I had started it a couple of years before and Paul Poiret had decorated it in the most fantastic manner until it was one of the sights of Paris. At that time very few "ladies" were in business and all my friends, artists, etc., considered it a very interesting experiment. My place was always crowded in the afternoon, as though I were holding a private reception with all the most distinguished people in Paris. I never could quite understand why.

In one corner of the room would be the famous beauty Sorel surrounded by a bevy of *jeuneusse dorée*, in another corner Ganna Walska, even the King of Spain and his retinue, and almost daily up until the time of war, Crown Prince Rupert of Bavaria was a frequent visitor. The Grand Duke Alexander Mihielivitch, and, in fact, any person of note who came to Paris, was sure to be seen that afternoon in Desti's. Sem, the famous caricaturist, made many designs of these gatherings, and they were passed all over Paris.

At first all this amused Isadora but then she decided for some reason or other I was an artist and it was too degrad-

ing to have anything to do with business, and as a means of ending it, she suggested that we stand at the window and throw all the perfume bottles into the street. "That," she said, "would be a great ending and show your disdain for business." But then with a gasp she continued, "No, we can't do that, for that would be the greatest réclame in the world. The thing to do is to close the door and walk out. Leave it alone."

But these drastic measures were taken for me and sorely against my will. On every side were terrific rumors and whispers of war and Isadora having so thoroughly disgusted me with business, I decided if there was a war, I was going in. So, on August 1st, the following notice appeared in the New York *Herald*, which I had sent to the editor.

To the Editor, New York Herald,
Paris:

Dear Sir.—As war, unfortunately, seems imminent, I, like many Americans who have lived for years in Paris, would like to inscribe as a garde malade.

In fact, if possible, I would like to form an ambulance and invite any American trained nurse or doctor who feel they owe it to this beautiful hospitable country to join me.

I took my training as student of the Herring Homeopathic Hospital and Medical College in Chicago. Later I was the organizer and first president of the Chicago Home for Convalescent Women and Children, and, having had quite a little experience, I feel quite capable of rendering service in times of need.

d'Esti
(Mary d'esti Sturges.)
4 Rue de la Paix, Paris.

Later that afternoon Mr. Herrick, the American Ambassador at that time, having read the editorial, called me and gave me a severe scolding, saying there was no war and if there was, that we had nothing whatever to do with it and the thing for us to do was to sit very quiet and tend to our own knitting.

Later in the afternoon, Judge Gary called me and asked me to meet him at the Ritz, where I got the same message to mind my own business and remember that America had nothing to do with the war.

But I had already volunteered and, as I said, was the very first man, woman or child of any nation on earth to volunteer in this great war. The next day war was declared and the Rue de la Paix under my windows changed as if by magic from a fashionable shopping street into a roaring caserne. Our bookkeepers, doormen, and other men employed around the place ran out shouting, stuffing razors in their pockets, and five minutes afterwards, down the street, they were handed bundles of military uniform, fitting them in any haphazard way. Such joyous shouting, shrieking, and hurrahs from these men and signs galore as if painted by the wind on all the cars and wagons "Off to Berlin"—"We'll be back soon." I put up an American flag we had there and fastened it outside the window, where it remained for the first three years of the war until it hung in tatters. We all tore the flowers from the window boxes, scattering them on the wild, mad heroes who were going off to the battlefields.

Upon my return to the Hotel Crillon, I found Isadora in a terrible state of nervousness. Dr. Bosson had been staying there with us but had been notified to report immediately

ISADORA DUNCAN IN ONE OF HER BEAUTIFUL
SPANISH SHAWLS (1912)

for military service and had left. He had brought a great basket of instruments which he left behind with the most unsympathetic nurse, who seemed terrified at the idea of his having left her alone. I begged Isadora to come out and look for a nursing home or hospital but she insisted she was too tired and would do that the next day. She really felt too weary. We had left Bellevue because all the servants had gone with the first rumor of war. So it seemed impossible to return there.

The next morning at four o'clock, Isadora came in my room, saying, "Mary, I think we must find a nursing home now." I begged her to peacefully stay in the Crillon but nothing would do. Lohengrin had given her a superb open car and, after having some coffee, we got in the car with the nurse and the basket of instruments, and started on one of the queerest journeys of my life.

The hotel had given us the addresses of half a dozen nursing homes. Often when we would arrive at a certain address, we would have to wait in the car until Isadora had got over a spasm of pain. Then, after they had taken us up in the elevator into one of their rooms, Isadora would utter a shriek, "Take me out, take me out of this place." Down the elevator again, into the car, and off to another place.

Finally in desperation, at nine o'clock, we tried to pass one of the gates out of Paris to go to Bellevue but the guards refused to let us out. Hundreds of soldiers were already tearing up the pavements of Paris and barricading these entrances, as there were rumors that the Germans were almost at the gates.

Realizing that there was very little time, I decided to

storm the gates and told the chauffeur that no matter who said to stop, at the next gate, he was to rush right through. The gate happened to be open when we got there, and as I jumped out, I told the chauffeur to go on and he shot through as the guards yelled at him to stop. I explained that that was Isadora Duncan and her baby was being born and she had to get to Bellevue. They put me through a third degree of questions but I finally convinced them and they allowed me to return to Paris for a doctor.

Half an hour later I went through the same gates with a very well-known Parisian specialist and upon our arrival at Isadora's château, we found Augustin with Isadora and the nurse, but no other attendant in the entire house. There was no maid or servant of any kind.

The baby was born about an hour later but we understood very quickly that this exquisite little child that looked like a Donatella statue hadn't a chance of living. His lungs refused to expand despite everything science could do.

I suggested that Isadora at least should have the joy of holding him in her arms for a few minutes. It seemed to me so horrible that she should never see him, this little being that she had counted upon as her salvation. So, very pale and with trembling hands, I carried him in and placed him in her arms.

It seemed as if the gates of heaven had opened for Isadora. We left him alone with her for just a few moments and being too overcome myself, I sent the nurse in to bring him away. Isadora had already noticed something was wrong and begged the nurse to take the greatest care. Lohengrin had telephoned, asking me for the news and when I told him the baby's condition, he said he was sending some

oxygen at once and to do everything under heaven, everything to save Isadora's baby. The oxygen arrived and had been tried, as everything else had, without the slightest results.

Then Augustin and I went in and sat one on each side of Isadora. She said, "Tell me the truth, Augustin." He said, "Isadora, poor Isadora, your baby is dead."

There are no words to describe the mute sorrow that passed over Isadora. She simply closed her eyes, while Augustin went out and I sat quietly beside her.

After a little time the doctor had gone and taken Augustin with him to prepare for the interment of the little baby. When Isadora opened her eyes, she begged me to get her a cup of tea. Upon going in the other room, I found the nurse had gone. Whether to see about food for herself or what, I don't know, but there I was, terrified. It was dusk and in this tremendous palace of two hundred odd rooms and about eighty bathrooms, and the great winding, sinister stairs, and the little dead baby lying there alone, my knees shook together as I went down the two flights to the kitchen, hoping to find the nurse there.

I finally prepared some tea and how I ever got up those stairs again, seeing ghosts and shadows in every corner and groping my way along the now dark hall to Isadora's room, without dropping dead from fright, will always be a mystery to me.

Soon we heard Augustin return and then the hammering of the little box that held all Isadora's hopes and dreams of happiness. She asked me to give her a book from the next room and I went and picked out the first book my hand touched in the bookcase. When Isadora opened it, she gave

a groan. It was the same volume of "Niobe Lamenting Her Children" that some one had given her the night before the death of her two loved ones. Many times afterwards she asked me how I happened to give her that book but I never could tell. I never even looked at the title. I was so frozen with horror and fear and pity that I could not have identified one book from another.

In the weeks that followed I advised Isadora that the only thing to do was to turn the house over as a hospital and, if she could in any way put aside her personal sorrow, come with me, putting all our strength and energy into this work, but she declared she could never stay there and besides her health was terribly impaired.

So the second week in August, after she had given everything she had to this hospital, we left for Deauville in an open car. She refused to stop at sundown. As the military allowed no travelling during the night, at midnight we were arrested and brought into military headquarters, where the general, upon hearing how it was, took us under his protection and after a very fine dinner and breakfast in the morning we were allowed to continue our journey to Deauville.

Upon arriving at Deauville, we found they were just forming the hospital in the great Casino and I was put in charge of this hospital under Isadora's great friend and marvellous surgeon, Dr. M. I worked there day and night, only going home to get a few hours' sleep. It was a terrible thing to enter this wondrous pavilion where but two weeks before all the beauty and grace of Europe had gathered to gamble, dance, or dine, and now in this great hall, in place of the long green tables, were countless little white cots each

IN THE HOSPITAL MATITAN, DEAUVILLE CASINO. THE AUTHOR IS SEATED AT THE LEFT. ISADORA DUNCAN IS IN THE BACKGROUND (1914)

containing a broken piece of humanity with terrible, sorrowful eyes wondering what it all was about. Two months before her death, Isadora and I visited this same casino again, where we silently walked among the gay throng visualizing the picture of August, 1914. What ghosts for us!

CHAPTER VII

DEPARTURE OF ISADORA AND SCHOOL FROM AMERICA DURING WAR

ISADORA had returned to America and I, thoroughly worn out with war work, had joined her. Many will remember her dancing the "Marseillaise" so heroically. After great financial worries, she decided to take her pupils back to Europe if she could raise the money to pay their way; this she succeeded in doing. With a group of friends, I went to the boat (the *Dante Alighieri*) to see her off. She begged me to go with her and seemed so sad I couldn't refuse, and without any baggage whatsoever, passport or ticket, I remained on the boat, Mr. Mitchell Kennerly throwing on to the deck from the pier (and nearly missing it) a purse with enough money to pay my passage, and so I sailed for Naples with Isadora, arriving in Italy the day the Italians entered the war.

What almost culminated in a tragedy, nearly destroying Isadora's school, was a telegram that Isadora had sent from the boat on which we were going to Naples. Isadora had left America with the children, twenty-eight in all, with no money whatsoever except their tickets and, fearing that it would take some time to sell or mortgage her house in Paris, she decided she would dance in South America for the season and instructed her secretary to send a message by wireless to her former manager in Buenos Ayres, asking for an immediate contract.

After three or four days she was very much astonished at

not receiving a reply, and afterwards, while talking to the radio operator, he made some remark about her girls going to South America and asked her if she was pleased with the radiogram she had received the day before. As she had received no message at all, she was very much surprised.

He then took us to the radio room and showed us a copy of it.

Her secretary, who with his wife and child had lived on Isadora's bounty for more than a year, decided as a great stroke of business that instead of sending Isadora's message asking for a contract for herself, to send one asking for a contract for the four older girls under his management. As he had sent the message, the radio operator had no hesitancy in giving him the reply, and upon arriving at Naples, he felt it would be a very simple matter to induce the four older girls to accompany him to Buenos Ayres, starting a career of their own.

Isadora was truly broken-hearted by this treachery, and immediately on leaving the ship at Naples we went to see the American Consul, asking for protection of the girls against this so-called secretary. Isadora and I then remained in one hotel while all the children with their governess were sent to another, as she didn't wish to see them until she got over this horrible chagrin. However, after a couple of days, Isadora's loving heart yearned for these dear little girls whom she really regarded as her own children and she asked me if I would go and fetch them.

As I entered the sitting room of the other hotel, I found the four girls and the secretary, and when I asked them if they would come to Isadora, he at once began the most outrageous tirade against her and without realizing what I

was doing, I grabbed him by the shoulders and hit his head against the wall, nearly shaking his teeth out.

The girls returned with me to see Isadora, saying he had frightened them, telling them they would be sent to Raymond's and that Isadora was going off alone. After Isadora told them the truth, that she was going first to Paris to raise money on the house and that they would go with me to Switzerland, they were all delighted and we went off together and had a glorious dinner with the American Consul and his family.

The next day some Italian friends invited us to an old rustic restaurant high in the hills overhanging Naples. After lunch Isadora danced for us. There were no other guests in the place at the time but several musicians who played beautifully.

The blue Italian skies, the beautiful Italian music, the sea dancing down below, the garden walls hung with luscious figs, the perfume of the wild jasmine, and Isadora in her little white frock and blue shawl dancing like an angel, made a never to be forgotten picture.

The next morning we put Isadora on the train for Paris and with all the children and their governess I took the train for Zurich. We had a very amusing time with the passports, as the war had only been declared about four or five days, and there was great consternation about what strangers would be allowed to pass through.

Two officials came in, asking for passports. I showed them first the four Russian passports, of which they could not understand a word—then several American ones—then one Swiss and one Belgian—the four older girls being German, I didn't dare show their passports, so I again pulled

ISADORA DUNCAN AT CAP FERIAT (1916)

out the four Russian ones as belonging to the four older girls. This satisfied the officials but nearly ruined me, as I feared every minute the treacherous little secretary might come and tell that these girls were Germans and stop my getting them out of the country.

I have never seen anything quite so funny as what happened the minute we crossed the border into Switzerland. The German girls began singing the German anthem, at which the little French and Russians jumped on them, biting and scratching like little demons. Fortunately we had the car to ourselves and by the time we arrived at Zurich we were able to bring about a little peace.

As we had no money at all, we went to the finest hotel, the Baur Au Lac, where we were sure to find friends, and fortunately the first person we met was Mr. Harold McCormick, who with his wife and children were staying there. I explained our circumstances to him and that Isadora would return within a few days and wished me to arrange a performance.

He was kindness itself and helped me arrange to take the Grand Opera House and to bill the whole town for Isadora's coming. Really he was like a schoolboy. He worked so hard and diligently.

The day of the performance the house was sold out and with all the children carrying flowers and wreaths we went to the train to meet Isadora, but alas, no Isadora,—nothing but a telegram saying she would come in three days.

We had to exchange all the tickets, take the Opera House over again, and then finally Isadora arrived and gave one of the most successful and beautiful performances of her life. This magnificent artist simply charmed the hearts of

all who ever saw her dance. Hundreds of people stood outside who couldn't possibly get in.

After the performance Isadora danced on the lawn of the hotel and took up a collection, of which she gave half to the German and half to the French Red Cross.

CHAPTER VIII

ISADORA IN RUSSIA (1921)

IN May, June, and July, 1921, there appeared in the Parisian press the following:

"Isadora Duncan is delighted with the Bolsheviks, especially with Krassin, through whom she has obtained a Soviet offer to open a dancing school for a thousand children in Moscow. The dancer said to French reporters, 'Soviet is the one government that cares about art nowadays and about children. I can no longer go on with my work in Paris. The Intellectuals have no more money, and the Trocadero tells me there is no one left—for me to create a school not only of dancing but of the plastic art. I expect to spend ten years in Russia. I will give my art to the Russians, whom I adore and who will support me with splendid musicians and disinterested enthusiasm.'

"Asked whether she was not afraid of a food shortage, Isadora replied, 'I fear spiritual hunger, but have no dread of hunger of the body. Privations do not count in advancing toward my ideal. It is the dream of my whole life that is to be realized.'

"Denying all interest in political systems, the famous dancer expressed herself as feeling that only in Russia was there hope for the kind of school or dance she had dreamed of establishing. 'Such a school for dancing has always been my dream but in America numberless schools have been founded by people who use my methods without understanding them and teaching pupils everything they should not do

in the dance. I suppose America prefers foreigners to me because I am an American. However, every artist worth anything has always been vilified. It is the price the world demands for the beauty we evoke.' "

In another article Isadora relates a story of crushed and defeated idealism in which unimaginative America was mostly to blame and in which Russia was seen as the one remaining hope.

" 'I seek a spiritual refuge from the world. I will go to Russia, perhaps, to realize the one dream of my life—to have my own theater, my own orchestra and an audience that does not have to bargain for seats and many pupils who will not have to pay money for education. Leonid Krassin has invited me to establish a national school in Russia. I did not make a contract. I have had enough of contracts. I am going on July 1st.

" 'Russians have been misrepresented. They may not have enough to eat there but they are determined that art, education and music must be free to all. I am eager to see if there is one place in the world that does not worship commercialism above the mental and physical training of its children.

" 'Maybe I am becoming a Bolshevist, but all my life I have wanted to teach children, to have schools and a theater free. America rejected this but over there they still have child labor and only the rich can see the opera and beauty is commercialized by the theater manager and moving picture magnates. They only want money, money, money.

" 'The Soviet Minister of Public Instruction Lounarcharsky will make arrangements for me in Russia to take over the Opera Ballet for the instruction of children. My only definite plan is to train a great ballet of a hundred

which takes a long time but we may tour Europe and show the results of the work.'

"Miss Duncan is closing her Paris house and emigrating to Reval, where a Bolshevist special train will be waiting under orders from Krassin."

. . . . . .

Russia! Russia! Isadora's first thought in opening her eyes in the morning and her last thought before closing them at night was Russia. Russia where she believed all false convention, all inequality, all injustice had been swept away, and where nothing but harmony and brotherly love reigned. That was the Utopia that Russia meant to her.

After all, Isadora had suffered and much of it indeed through her uncontrollable love for expressing on any and every occasion her contempt for wealth and the uses it was put to, and her everlasting disgust for marriage and its hypocrisy.

She was returning to Russia, where she had some of the greatest successes of her life, where people loved her, and where they had invited her to make her school. No one blamed Isadora for what she *did*, but for what she *said*, which was often so terribly misunderstood and turned against her. Now all this was to be changed. She was going to a new country, where one could freely express all one felt or thought. Here was her great opportunity, and she meant completely to cut off the old world and hail forever the new.

Isadora delayed leaving Paris until the last moment, awaiting the arrival of her mother from America, but her ship was so far behind schedule, we finally had to leave.

(Isadora's mother arrived the day after she sailed for Russia.)

There was no longer time to take a train, and as the baggage was already in London, we flew across by airplane. Isadora had left her pupils in London, but when she arrived, much to her surprise, she learned that one had decided to return to America to marry; another, to Paris; and only one intended accompanying her to Russia. This was for her very sad, indeed, as she had counted on their co-operation to help form the new school. However, as she had left it entirely to their own choice whether they should follow her or not, there wasn't much to be said other than farewell.

Bidding good-bye to these girls, and not having had the opportunity of embracing her mother, was a very sad ordeal for Isadora, particularly after all she had gone through. Fortunately there were a great many last minute preparations to occupy her. I had asked my friend, Mr. Gordon Selfridge, to give Isadora all the supplies she needed in the way of warm clothing and bedding for herself, pupil, and maid—(this very wonderful maid who insisted on going with Isadora in spite of all the terrifying stories one heard about Russia)—and also every sort of canned goods that one could possibly use. All this had to be taken aboard ship before nightfall.

Isadora and I spent a most hectic day but in the midst of it we found time to visit a fortune teller, not that Isadora ever believed in this sort of thing, but did it more as a joke. She was told she was going on a long journey, would experience much trouble, many worries, and vicissitudes, but Isadora lost all patience when this person continued with "And one thing I can assure you, you will be married." This was really too much, for Isadora had never married,

marriage being the one bugbear of her life. As we tore down the stairs to our waiting car, this woman screamed after her, "You will be married. You will be married. And within a year."

As the car sped away, this fun was soon forgotten. Isadora was so enthused with her new project. At last, after all these years, her school was to be realized—the Ninth Symphony would yet be expressed by thousands of beautiful dancers, their souls uplifted on the wings of Beethoven's masterpiece. I believe Isadora felt she was on her way to Paradise, where all was perfect love, harmony, and comradeship—where there were no stupid rules or convention of any kind—where each human being gave the best that was in him for the sake of humanity—and where the children would all belong to her great school. There was no limit to her ambition. It was never Isadora's idea to create children for the stage. In fact, this was the very last thing she wanted. Her idea was to create perfect bodies with trained, harmonious spirits who would then express themselves beautifully in anything they did and who in turn would train and develop other children until all the children of the world would be one glorious, harmonious, and joyous dancing band.

Twice after she had boarded the ship, she ran down the gangplank to embrace me. "Mary, you should come with me. You should come with me. Why stay in this place of sorrow and trouble?"

I promised that at any time and anywhere I would come when she called. At last I found myself standing alone at ten o'clock at night on the London docks, and Isadora gone, as we all believed, forever.

Isadora's great adventure into Soviet Russia is best told as she told it to me.

On the way to Russia she had the feeling of a soul crossing the Styx. All known forms of life and conventions were forever over and she believed she was going to the ideal state created by Lenin. Nothing but contempt and pity for all the old institutions of Europe remained. She wanted to be a comrade among comrades and to give her life for humanity.

Her heart nearly burst with joy as the boat arrived. She felt like some great hero arriving in Valhalla. There was no retreat, no going back, nor did such a thought enter her mind. This was to be for ever and ever. Visions of thousands of children growing strong and beautiful, each one clasping the hand of a younger one, and then a younger one still, marching in great strides to the "Internationale." But Reval evidently was not the place where this was to begin. There was great confusion and endless red tape. Finally, after much shoving and great disregard for Isadora and her great mission, she found herself with one pupil and maid in a railway carriage en route to Moscow. In some way they had been given a package of black bread and caviar, the black bread having a most distressing effect on them all, as they were not accustomed to it. After a seemingly endless and very fatiguing journey, they arrived in Moscow.

Again that delightful pounding of her heart. She waited a few minutes to give the reception committee a chance to be sure she had arrived. Then, her feet scarcely touching the earth, she stepped from the train, expecting to be engulfed in the embraces of countless comrades and children. She had visions of them all in red shirts, waving red flags,

MARY DESTI

Photograph by E. O. Hoppe, taken about 1917

and welcoming her to their midst, but no one paid the slightest attention to them but the guard, who looked at them most suspiciously. Very much frightened, they entered the waiting room.

How different it all seemed from what Isadora had imagined! Soldiers everywhere. She seemed to be thrown back into the midst of war. Every one was scrutinized and his baggage gone through minutely. Every one looked at the other with suspicion. Courtesy and politeness had dropped from the world. Every one felt as though he was as good as the next and had the right to push and force his way anywhere he liked. No one seemed to be doing any regular job and all were constantly kept moving by the guards, who were terrified at the thought that any groups might form. As there was no money allowed, each one had to do his own work, such as carry his own bags and generally look after himself as best he could. Out of this pandemonium, a little lady finally appeared, asking in perfect English if she were Miss Duncan. Isadora replied, "I am Tavarish [Comrade] Duncan." She stated she had orders to show them to a hotel, and asked if they had much luggage. They gave her the tickets for the heavy baggage which she promised to send them and they all piled into a drosky.

Soon they were dumped down into a very dark, miserable looking hotel which Isadora had formerly known as one of the most fashionable hotels in Moscow. There were no porters to carry things; so they had to do the best they could in getting to their rooms. The little old lady left them to their misery, saying she would be in touch with them later.

When Isadora saw their room—that is exactly what they had—one room for the three of them, she decided there certainly must be something wrong. Again they were given

black bread and caviar and tea, then left entirely to their own resources. During the Revolution all the furniture from the hotels as well as private homes had been taken away to the great central emporium to be distributed among the Bolsheviks, so there was very little left for the comfort of guests. The three cots they slept on consisted of boards on little iron beds with a sort of matting over them. Fortunately they had their own sheets and blankets.

It being very late and all very tired, they decided to go to bed and await the morning when everything surely would be glorious, feeling there certainly must have been some dreadful mistake about their reception.

No sooner had they blown out the candles and made themselves as comfortable as possible on their bed of boards, when they were dismayed to hear squeaks and squeals, then the patter of tiny feet about the room and the jumping on and off the tables where they had left the rest of their black bread and caviar. Terrified, they lit the candles, but only to become still more terrified at seeing little eyes peering out from all the corners. Almost hysterical, they rang and rang, but without the slightest response. They looked out into the dark corridors but there was no one there. No one cared or bothered about them—in fact there just wasn't any one to care. The clerk downstairs had assigned them to a room and had provided food. There his duties and obligations ended. All this was very natural as there was no money, wages, or tips of any kind. None of them slept a wink and when their little friends became too familiar, they tried their best to keep from screaming.

All the next day they waited for the visit from the little old lady who had met them, but towards evening, as there

was no sign of her, Isadora decided to go out. The maid, terrified at what she had seen of scouting and peering faces everywhere, absolutely refused to leave the hotel, saying she preferred to be devoured by rats.

Much to Isadora's surprise, she found a drosky whose driver was willing to take them about in exchange for American dollars. So Isadora and her pupil drove about the battered and ill-kept streets trying to find some official. They were categorically refused entrance to the Kremlin and in a hopeless condition started driving back to the hotel. Upon glancing up at a window of a hotel they happened to pass, Isadora saw a young friend who was formerly of the Embassy in Paris.

She waved and called to him, and when he recognized her, he flew down the stairs, rushed out, and clasped her in his arms, crying, "Isadora, Isadora, oh, what joy! How do you happen to be in Moscow?"

Only too quickly did she explain her unfortunate condition and helplessness. He roared with laughter at her idea of Bolshevik Russia, but decided to first feed them and then go off to see Lounarcharsky and find out what accommodations had been made for them, declaring there was not a quarter enough room for the inhabitants of Moscow. In fact whole families of eight or ten were glad to get even one room to live in—mice or no mice.

But Isadora declared, "They have invited me to come and teach their children, thousands of them." His reply was, "I suppose they mean well enough, but children are homeless and starving everywhere, and dancing, after all, is a luxury. So I'm afraid you will have many disappointments."

How terribly prophetic his words were, Isadora was soon

to realize! Yet her enthusiasm for the great idea never wavered, although her first conception of Russia as a heaven on earth, flowing with brotherly love, was a bit shattered.

After they had dined, their kind friend went off in search of some one who could give him some information about what provision had been made for them. In the meantime they stayed in his hotel. He soon returned, declaring he could find out absolutely nothing. So, the next morning, Isadora went herself to her friend, the Minister of Fine Arts, Lounarcharsky, who seemed greatly astonished to see her and could find no trace of the sender of the telegram inviting her to come to Russia.

However, in his charming and distinguished way, he said he was delighted, and was sure the government would be, at her beautiful geste in coming to join them, and he would make arrangements at once for lodging and food for them. Later they would talk about the school.

This dampened Isadora's spirits considerably. All her dreams of her school again a joke—a sort of lunatic's raving, but having burned all bridges behind her, she decided to see it through and felt sure she could make them see the true value of her idea. While she was there, Lounarcharsky telephoned to a young man by the name of Schneider, telling him some accommodation must be found immediately for Isadora Duncan.

Whatever this young man replied, Isadora didn't know, but Lounarcharsky repeated to him, "Geizler's apartment; Geizler, oh, splendid! Splendid, Schneider," and went off in peals of laughter.

He turned to Isadora and said, "Well what do you think of that? They have proposed for you the apartment of

our most famous ballet dancer, Geizler, and her home being that of an artist, nothing therein has been disturbed. Therefore you will be most comfortable, and I'll see that you get the very best of caviar."

The young man, Mr. Schneider, appeared then and there, and upon passing their hotel, they picked up the pupil, maid, and baggage. Soon they were installed in the daintiest little bandbox of an apartment one could imagine.

The Geizler's house was a veritable museum of Dresden china. The mantelpiece and countless little tables strewn all over the place, leaving scarcely room to walk between them, were covered with pieces of very fine, very delicate china. One hardly dared to breathe for fear of knocking these things over. The candelabra were also Dresden china. The lamp beside the bed, all the fittings on the dressing table, anywhere and everywhere one moved, one would touch a piece of delicate china. Shepherds and shepherdesses by the hundred were blowing kisses or tucking up their dainty little china petticoats, bowing and curtsying in the minuet or swinging hand in hand in the fantastic little dances imagined by the creators of Dresden china. Such exquisite, dainty, useless pieces of dust catchers, that have been the torture of maids for many a year and had given the Geizler many a chance to use her high prerogative as first ballet dancer to box their ears.

All this delicate china was so out of keeping with everything Isadora had expected in Communistic Russia that one day, when her shawl accidently caught on one of these pieces, causing it to crash on the floor, it so irritated her overstrained nerves, that she swept a whole table of them into oblivion, and for a moment threatened to open the window and dash the rest into the street.

The poor cook wept for days at the punishment she felt she would receive when the Geizler came back and found one of her slightest treasures missing. The Geizler in spite of her sixty odd years was still a very strong, robust ballet dancer and a great favorite at the opera.

Young Schneider, who had for years been the intimate friend of the famous Geizler and with whom she had just quarrelled before leaving for the south of Russia, was delighted at the turn things had taken. The Geizler was one of Isadora's bitterest critics, as Isadora was one of hers, and not only did she inherit the Geizler's apartment, but her cook, who was so shocked and horrified at any one daring to sleep in the Geizler's bed that she shook as with ague. They all screamed with laughter and in which the old cook joined after Schneider pointed out the joke of the whole thing—that Isadora was the great enemy of the ballet and meant to replace it in all Russia with her school of dancing. The old woman cooked and took care of them for months, but I understand she was badly beaten by the Geizler when she finally returned to the apartment.

Shortly after Isadora's arrival, she was invited to a social reunion of Bolsheviks. Here at last she thought she would meet comrades; people with whom she could talk, who would understand. To be worthy of the occasion she dressed herself in a red tunic, with a red scarf wound about her head, and as was always her custom in the evening, draped her red shawl about herself and set forth.

Imagine her surprise and disappointment when she was ushered into a charming Louis XVI salon with dainty spindle-legged chairs, sofas, Aubusson carpets, bric-à-brac, all over the place. Every one greeted her in perfect French, as Mlle. Duncan, but to which she curtly replied: "I am

Tavarish Duncan." This caused considerable amusement.

They were all seated like automatons, when one young lady sat at the piano and sang one after another, little French ballads, and was daintily applauded by the audience, with cries of "exquise, charmante." Isadora looked at this gathering of jewel-bedecked, well-dressed, décolleté people, wondering what it all meant. Finally she could stand it no longer and springing to her feet, said, "So this is Bolshevik Russia. My God! For this, the great bloody Revolution. Nothing is changed but the performers. You have taken their jewels, furniture, clothes and manners. Only you don't do it so well. Let me out! Let me out!" And she ran screaming from the place.

Arriving at home, Isadora roared with laughter. What a simple idiot she felt she had been to think that anything could be changed in this world! Bolshevism—words, nothing but words! She was ready to drown herself. But other things happened which gave her confidence again. In the midst of one of her dance recitals one night, all the lights of the theater went out and she was left on the stage with only a tiny little red oil lamp. The theater was filled with Russian peasants who had stood for hours in the snow waiting to gain admission and when the place was thrown into darkness, Isadora immediately feared what might happen, as the Russians are very impulsive and excitable. She realized something must be done at once and seizing the little red lamp, she held it above her head, looking for all the world like some symbolic red figure. They cheered and applauded with great enthusiasm but Isadora knew this could not last for long and the inspiration came to her to ask them to sing their national songs. Immediately they were fired with the spirit of the thing and one after another

they sang and sang their fiery revolutionary songs. Nearly all Russians sing well and that is what has carried them through some of their darkest days.

They kept this up for over an hour while Isadora's arm became so painful, holding the lamp over her head, that she scarcely could endure it but she knew the instant she lowered it, the charm would be broken. She said she felt they no longer saw her but the hope of their own future. The pain was becoming greater and Isadora was beginning to hear restless movements in the audience. She now thought for a moment, then said, "There is one more of your songs that I remember that you haven't sung—something about the dawn of a new life." At once the chorus swelled and swelled at this suggestion and then, very slowly, one by one, the lights in the theater came on. It was simply that the management had repaired the electric current, but the peasants believed it was an answer to their song and that a new day was born for them. They were wild with enthusiasm as Isadora continued her beautiful performance.

Shortly afterwards, on a little trip to the country, Isadora stopped at a little peasant's cottage to have tea. What was her great surprise but to find as tenants, Trotsky's father and mother, living on black bread and tea, in the poorest conditions. Amazed, she said, "I can't believe your great son would allow you to live and suffer like this."

"Our son is the cause of it," they replied. "Before the Revolution we were prosperous, happy people, in fact, well-to-do. We had a business that we had given our lives to build, and we were well reaping the reward."

"But your son could give you decent surroundings and everything you need."

"No, he believes in this Communism with his whole heart

ISADORA DUNCAN, FROM A PHOTOGRAPH TAKEN ABOUT 1915

(She is wearing the ermine coat which she sold later to an American singer)

and soul, and his parents are no more to him than any other comrades. It is all for the good of the whole. There must be plenty for all or suffering for all,—the common lot."

Here was a new angle. There were some sincere Bolsheviks after all. Isadora went back feeling stronger, and determined to see Trotsky and Lenin at once. This was easier said than done as these wonderful men were working night and day, taking scarcely time to snatch a cup of tea, and they had but few hours' sleep. Lenin never left the Kremlin, and when exhausted, lay down as he was, in his clothes.

On another trip into the country, they were sitting beside the river, with a very tasty lunch spread out on the grass (they still had many cans of Mr. Selfridge's excellent food with them). They were all very gay, as Isadora always was near the water and in the country, but she found they had forgotten matches and could not light their cigarettes. They saw a boat slow up and several men descend. They seemed to be rather curious, so Isadora asked them for a match. Delighted, they lit the cigarettes. One especially was very handsome. He was well over six feet tall, marvellously built, and had gleaming white teeth and the cheeriest smile. As he spoke English perfectly, Isadora asked him who he was. He said, "I'm Boradine. I teach school in Chicago." This caused much merriment. They joined their party and had a very happy time.

And that was the famous Boradine who was responsible for the Chinese Revolution and whose wife we saved by sending a telegram to China when she was about to be executed. I afterwards met the Boradines in Russia and he laughingly corroborated this story, adding that Isadora

danced revolutionary dances for them then and there, and had it not been for his wife and two children, he would have run off with her.

Isadora now spent most of her time seeing this official and that official about her school. Each one promised to do what he could but what could they do? The city was overrun with people for whom no lodging could be found, and thousands and thousands of starving children were running wild like animals, not knowing or caring to whom they belonged; most of their parents had been killed or lost in the Revolution and they slept in any hole or corner, for the most part, stealing during the day. Isadora would have taken them all if they only would have given her a home and some bread.

Three months passed by in this hopeless way until one day Lounarcharsky called with the glad tidings that he had a palace for her, right in the heart of Moscow. This good news affected Isadora so that she wept for sheer joy. Now at last she would see what could be accomplished. Oh, it was worth waiting for. Her star was in the ascendancy. She nearly choked with anticipation.

She was now given the palace of a famous ballet dancer and here everything that atrocious bad taste with unlimited money could buy, was evident. Fortunately the place had been looted again and again, so there remained very little furniture. The house itself was beautifully proportioned,—immense rooms, high ceilings, but each room or salon had been done over in a different period, all the Louis, plus Chinese, Japanese, Indian, and a bit of Russian thrown over all for good measure. Water pipes and heating had all been more or less removed, including the beds. This was the worst blow of all, because you could not buy them at any

price. They just didn't exist. The people who had them, had never before had a spring or mattress in their life, and they meant to keep them. After great maneuvering and bribing, Isadora finally succeeded in getting a brass bed, mattress, and spring; also a big stove which she put up in the great salon, which was used as living room, bed room, studio, etc., but nothing could keep the stove from smoking and they usually went about with their faces covered with soot.

Isadora had notices posted everywhere that she would take fifty children of talent for the dance. A deluge of children appeared the next day and the pity of it was she couldn't take them all. The sobbing and heart-breaking cries of the little ones she couldn't take, and the wailings and recriminations of mothers, was something awful. These little ones stretching their skeleton arms with fingers like straws toward her, crying, "Isadora, Isadora," nearly broke her heart. She took twice as many as she had places for, then wondered what she would do with them.

The first thing was to feed them and as the government had not yet made provision for this band and as it would take much time, red tape and waiting, she brought out the remaining Selfridge canned goods, and began her school. Oh, how different from the first school in Grünewald, Germany, with its forty little white cots trimmed with dainty curtains and blue bows! Here all Isadora could do was to stretch boards from slats nailed to the walls, and with a blanket to cover them, three or four would sleep together. Isadora finally secured blankets from the American Relief. Things were beginning to change. One could now buy things from the government stores and she had had sent to her from France the last money she possessed in the world, and which she really had left so that the interest

would take care of her mother, but she couldn't see the children starving, or the grown-ups for that matter.

All the poor artists in Moscow found this to be their spiritual home and they never sat down at a table with less than fifteen or twenty guests.

CHAPTER IX

ISADORA'S MEETING AND MARRIAGE TO YESSENIN (1922)

ONE night a group of artists invited Isadora to a party at the home of a well-known poet and before going she had a sort of presentiment. She went to the children's dormitory and said, "Remember, children, always, what I have taught you. It's a sacred trust I have given you, that you in turn may teach other children, no matter what happens to me. Promise me this."

With hushed, trembling voices, they all replied, "We promise, Isadora—our Isadora."

All the young intelligentsia of Moscow were at this party. Isadora had put on her long dancing tunic with gold sandals and gold gauze wrapped about her head and hair. She made her lips very red and eyes very black. She wanted to look devilish. She had seen enough of gruesomeness and suffering and her whole body thrilled at the idea of any orgy of artists. When Russians do things, they do them to the limit. No amount of restriction, laws, or want will keep Russian artists from giving magnificent parties if they choose. I have known them to go out at midnight without a penny and come back loaded with little birds, caviar, cheese, fruit, vodka, and champagne. Where they got it, Heaven alone knows.

The party was in full swing when she arrived. "Oh, Isadora, why are you so late? Already our young poet Yes-

senin has searched half of Moscow to find you. He has heard of your fame and declares he will not sleep again until he has joined you."

As is the custom with each new arrival, Isadora was given an immense glass of vodka, which one is obliged to drain, while the entire company sing your history. You dare not leave a drop. This is enough to start any one on the road to destruction. After that, you eat and drink everything given you. Nothing matters. You need not wait hours to get in the spirit of things. They see you get in at once.

Suddenly the door burst open and the most beautiful face she claimed to have ever seen, crowned with golden glittering curls, and piercing blue eyes, stared into hers. She needed no introduction. Here was fate. She opened her arms and he fell on his knees clasping her close to him, shouting, "Isadora, Isadora, mia, mia."

She was afterward told she danced, that Sergei Yessenin recited poetry, that they returned to her home and had a great feast, but all she could remember was that golden curly head lying on her breast, crying, "Isadora, Isadora, mia, mia," and to her dying day, she declared she felt those blue eyes looking into hers, and felt that she must rock him to rest, her little golden haired child.

From this day on Isadora was never to know an hour of peace and it was not very long before she discovered her young poet was not only a great genius but also a mad one. He had a group of followers who were constantly with him and never allowed them to be alone. Day after day, night after night, the house was filled with this charming, wild mad band of writers, painters, and artists of every sort.

At this time in Russia, artists were supported by the government and they all more or less abused this privilege. While other people were starving and every one was obliged to do work of some kind, they were the spoiled darlings of the Bolsheviks. Whether this was due to genuine love for them or for fear of the things they would write, one never knew. Certainly they roundly abused the government on every occasion and carried on in the wildest way, as though they were in Montmartre. This group was called the Scandalists and they lived up to their name. There was nothing they did not think of to create mischief and havoc. They were uproariously drunk every night of their lives and they never dreamed of going to sleep until daylight. In fact, for two or three days at a time they would keep up their wild, mad parties, going from house to house, defying every one and everything and the law included. For some reason no one dared lay a hand on them. Yessenin was the ring leader, and about the time Isadora met him, he and another young poet friend of his, Mariengoff, owned some sort of a night club where only the intelligentsia were allowed to enter, and in which everything was broken before the end of the evening. I believe this had just been closed a day or two before it was her good or bad fortune to meet him.

He took it as a matter of course that her school, her house, and everything she had, belonged to him from this time on and naturally in true fashion what belonged to him, belonged to all his friends. All this did not tend to make it any easier to form the school or to get help from the government. Isadora went continually for food for these children to one official after another, and at last succeeded in getting for them one meal a day, provided the American

Relief gave one meal a day and she a third. The American Relief did a wonderful work over there, for thousands of children would have starved had it not been for them.

In this way they went on for months. Although she was madly and rapturously in love, she found time to teach her pupils every day and they waxed and bloomed into lovely creatures. The only punishment in the school was to forbid the children, if they had been unusually unruly, to take part in the dancing classes that day, and truly no physical punishment could have been harder. They seemed to think this a terrible disgrace. Their hours of dancing were the great joys of their lives.

Sergei usually slept until very late, in fact all did, as is the Russian custom, except the children who were obliged to be up and at their classes. Towards evening, very often Sergei would disappear and they would hear nothing from him until about midnight or one o'clock, when the house was perfectly quiet and all the little children asleep. He would return with this great roaring band, making a noise like nothing on earth, bounding up the great marble staircases, screaming, "Isadora, couchet, couchet." Then the poor little French maid, Jeanne, would be roused from her bed and obliged to make pancakes and other delicacies for the next couple of hours. They always brought with them their musical instruments and played and sang, recited poetry, and danced.

A very funny incident happened about this time. Two American Jews came to call at the school one day, travelling salesmen, I believe, saying they would like to see the children dance. Isadora was always very happy to have the children dance, hoping always to interest some one in their support. These men had on two magnificent fur coats

PORTRAIT OF SERGEI YESSENNIN

Drawn on a train in Russia by Constantin A Ladjalov. 1920

with tremendous sable collars and they told with great glee what wonderful bargains they had made—how cheaply they had purchased those two coats and that they were going later into the country where they were promised some very fine jewels, also at very low prices. They rather disgusted Isadora and she took no further notice of them, but that evening about ten o'clock there was terrific knocking and great ringing of the bell, and the young Jews were back again, with nothing on them but their trousers, and an old blanket and nearly frozen to death. They begged to come in until they could get some clothes from the hotel. Then they told their story, about how they had been followed, possibly by the very people from whom they had bought the fur coats, their coats, money, watches, and everything taken away from them and were given a good beating besides. Every one laughed hysterically at these poor fellows but provided them with enough clothes to get home.

Isadora had come to Russia without sufficient furs and as the weather was bitter cold, the Commissar had invited her to come down and select from the thousands and thousands of fur coats which they had gathered up from all the aristocrats, ones that would suit her. She selected a very simple squirrel coat as she could not bear to touch the lovely sables, ermines, and other valuable things belonging perhaps to the Czarina or other members of the nobility, many of whom had formerly been her friends. Besides she had not come to Russia to profit but rather to give.

At this time they went very often to see one of the world's greatest sculptors, Konenkov, and found him in one large room where, instead of burning for heat the logs of wood allotted him, he had managed a little charcoal stove at one end of the long room and there, wrapped to the eyes,

in any kind of warm clothing he could find, he carved day and night, some of the most wonderful things, out of his firewood. Here Sergei seemed to be his happiest. He would recite his poems for hours, while Konenkov continued peacefully at his work. Then Konenkov would bring out some vodka, black bread, and sausage and they would have a marvellous feast. These were some of the happiest days of Isadora's life.

Her school seemed a possibility and it only meant waiting a while until things were a little more in order before the government would surely support it. Finally they had no more money, food, or coal. She telegraphed her manager in America, stating she would like to come for a tour of the States. He was delighted, having answered so at once, but the great question now was, what to do about Sergei? They had sworn eternal love and never meant to be separated.

Poor Sergei craved love as his only salvation, for he believed that love alone could break up his dangerous life of drinking and debauchery. He felt that he had wasted his life and there was nothing left for him. Love was his last hope and it might bring about a happy and quiet life, about which he had always raved. This seemed to be like a dream from his childhood. Isadora knew this. So what was she to do? The Russian government absolutely forbade him to leave, stating that there would be great difficulty upon his arrival in America, and that he would never be allowed to enter, on account of his history. His life was rather a sad one and his thoughts were always of suicide. Sergei Yessenin was born in the little village of Constantinovo in the state of Ryazan on October 4, 1895. His father, a very poor peasant with a large family, was obliged

to give Sergei to his maternal grandfather, who already had three grown sons and consequently his childhood was spent among these brutal, overgrown, uncouth peasants who took the greatest joy in teaching him all their wildness. At the age of three they put him on a horse without a saddle and beat the animal until it ran away with him. Then they would throw him into the water and roar with laughter while he tried to save himself. However, this made a very good swimmer of him and, as he often had to hide from them, he became an exceptional tree climber.

It was not long before he became very wild and was the leader of the gang, passing his time in fighting and scandal. He was forever covered with bruises. No one tried to discipline him, every one encouraged him in this rough life except his dear grandmother, who finally decided he must become a village teacher and sent him to a seminary, where, upon graduating, he was supposed to go to the Teachers Institute in Moscow.

Sergei had already begun to write poetry. In fact he began when he was nine years old under the influence of his grandmother, who used to tell him many fairy tales, but he didn't like the way many of them ended, so he wrote his own endings. Believing in his own talent, he refused to go to Teachers Institute, and at sixteen his first poems were printed. He did not believe in God, church, or the devil, and in 1916 he was mobilized into military service where, under the protectorate of Colonel Loman, Adjutant of the Empress, he was granted many privileges.

While he was stationed in the little village of Tsarskoye, the summer residence of the Imperial family, through the colonel, he was invited to read his poetry to the Empress.

She found it very beautiful but very sad. To which he replied, "But so all Russia is sad."

He worked with the Revolutionist Socialist party only as a poet and when that party became divided, he became a Bolshevik. However, politics interested him very little. Poetry and scandal were the things he lived for. As he felt he had already conquered Russia, he now wanted to conquer the rest of the world. But he refused to study any foreign languages, and is known for saying, "If any one wishes to know me, they will have to learn Russian." His pet name was the "dainty Hooligan."

Isadora, realizing all this, knew there was only one way possible to get him out of Russia and that was to break the conviction of her life about marriage, and become the wife of Yessenin.

So, on May 3, 1922, they went to the Russian Registrar, and signed a paper which really was not binding on either side but which is all that constitutes a marriage in Russia, so long as one wishes to consider it so. After a great celebration, a marvellous lunch, and much champagne, she wrote out her last will and testament, stating that in case of her death before Yessenin he was to inherit everything of which she died possessed. If he died before her then her beloved brother Augustin was to inherit everything. Then they stepped into an airplane and started on their way to Berlin.

The following articles are various press comments from New York papers while Isadora was in Russia:

"Isadora Duncan at least is not discouraged about Bolshevism. She thinks it is going to be the biggest thing in world history since Christianity began and she is in at the beginning, teaching youthful Bolshevists how to dance.

She left Paris for Moscow some weeks ago on the invitation of the Soviet Government to set up her dancing school in Moscow and here is what she thinks about her new quarters as she has written to the Paris Communist organ *Humanite.*

> " 'Dear Comrades: You ask for my impressions of my journey, but all that I can give you are impressions of an artist, as I am too ignorant in political matters. I have left Europe where art is crushed by commercialism. I am convinced that in Russia the greatest human miracle produced in two thousand years is happening. We are too near to see more than the mere material effects, but those who live during the next hundred years will realize that humanity through the Communist régime took a great step forward. The martyrdom Russia is suffering for the sake of the future will prove as fertile as the martyrdom of the Nazarene. Only fraternity of the workers of the world, only the Internationale can save mankind.
>
> " 'As to the famine, I have no fear. My mother, a poor piano teacher with children, frequently did not have enough to eat but she always managed to appease our hunger by playing Schubert or Beethoven while we danced instead of eating. It was thus I made my début as a danseuse.' "

The Paris press in October, 1921, carried the following interview given by Isadora to the Minister of Fine Arts, Lounarcharsky.

"In the Moscow *Isvestia,* Lounarcharsky echoes Isadora's confidence that she will succeed in creating a new school, for he says that, although since she arrived in Moscow the

remaining old Bourgeoisie crowded around and tried to entice her to their salons, Isadora merely tightened her belt and announced that she would not dance where an entry fee was charged or where Russian Commoners could not enter.

"Lounarcharsky continues, 'Of course I told Miss Duncan how little the Bourgeoisie clique amounted to which was trying to separate her from our noble revolution but perhaps it will be necessary to use harder measures in order to defend her from the devilish tempters. Miss Duncan has been called the Queen of Gesture but the greatest she ever made was when she left Paris life and decided to throw her lot with the Russian Revolutionaries.'

"Isadora's own words were, 'There is only the solidarity of the working people as typified by the Internationale which can safeguard the future of civilization' and she has described the state of Russia then as one beautiful awakening to realities, with miracles working out under the Soviet leaders greater than anything since the birth of Christ."

In November and December, 1921, the press of Moscow said: "Isadora was said to be outbolsheviking the Bolsheviki, for one of the features of the celebration in Moscow of the fourth anniversary of the Revolution was a performance given by Isadora at the ex-Imperial Opera, where workingmen who were good Communists, or who belonged to trade unions or the Red Army, were admitted free of charge and Miss Duncan would not accept pay for the tickets nor would she distribute any among the intellectuals. The remainder of the Red Army was mobilized to prevent the eager crowds which heralded her first appearance that season from forcing the doors."

"Isadora Duncan took over the Soviet National School

of Dancing in the hope of reconciling her one and only true art of dancing with the one and only ideal government. She was given a palace to live in herself and a part of another one for her school. An enthusiastic Tavarish, Isadora hoped to achieve where others have failed to weld art and communism together.

"*Proletkult*, the Soviet abbreviation for proletarian culture, was the name which Lounarcharsky had given this department of education. He had hoped to glorify the Revolution through radical art. At first the output of futuristic plastic casts and bright red and yellow pictures was attempted and every one agreed that they were modern enough, in fact, too modern in the opinion of most Russian critics to be called either art or proletarian. There were not enough proletarian artists who could do things the people understood. Consequently Proletkult was dying a natural death until Isadora came and attempted to put new life into it.

"Camerade Duncan feels that her former dances are in themselves revolutionary, a revolt against the former Russian Ballet, and therefore in presenting them unchanged before the Russian public, preceded and concluded by calling upon her pupils and the public to chant the 'Internationale.' Isadora declared that not only the ballet, which in the opinion of most travellers is one of the few remaining bright spots in drab Russia to-day, should be abolished, but also most of the more essential national Russian peasant dances. She saw some Russian children dancing a simple rondo with handkerchief dropping and that sort of thing, symbolizing country courtship, and found it nefarious in that she imagined it somehow seemed to involve subservience to the Czar. With a skyward gesture she told the Moujik

children through an interpreter that they should make the same movement and think of Apollo.

"In no country could Isadora have found such willing pupils as in Russia. Some of them would splash five miles across the muddy Moscow streets to her studio. They gathered in the big cold room, themselves blue with cold and underfed but intensely eager, all of them to become great dancers.

"Combining art and official communism seems however an impossible task. Camerade Duncan found it especially difficult because of the absence of the necessary material facilities. A bankrupt government could not offer much in the way of comforts. The school was closed one week for want of wood. After desperate and imploring appeals some was sent, yes, one, poor little stick, as Miss Duncan moaned, holding it up in despair.

"Isadora gave a demonstration of her traditional method with supreme ecstasy added. At each pause the 'Internationale' was sung. There was always great applause, so that it was sometimes difficult to divide the honors between homage for Miss Duncan's dancing and general revolutionary ardor. Some people found Isadora's simplicity a happy contrast to ballet complexity. Yes, and the ballet protested in a meeting the following day, but here again there may have been some jealousy, as it seems that the meeting was organized by a former hostess of Miss Duncan's who bears her a grudge for broken porcelain (the Geizler).

"Isadora showed great energy and was given a free hand by Lounarcharsky and consequently would have made something out of her school had it not been for the real difficult obstacles which proved disastrous. Isadora also discovered that when art and politics are mixed, art always suffers."

CHAPTER X

ISADORA SHOWS YESSENIN THE WORLD (1922)

ISADORA left Russia with only one idea in mind, and that was to show the beauties of the world to her young poet. She believed that he was a very fine and exceptional poet and so did the greater part of Moscow and I believe no one has contradicted this yet. This beautiful wild boy of twenty-seven years was of peasant origin and consequently his works were of the earth, of the simple village people he knew, of a dog baying at the moon, a plow in the fields, or other homely and simple objects. All this was done with very great talent.

Isadora often declared she was his Virgil and would lead him through the world, opening his eyes to all the precious beauties in art, and had it not been for the mad strain in this boy's blood (epilepsy), great things might have been achieved.

Yessenin told a very romantic story about one day when the Czar with his family and court were passing through his village, little Princess Titania noticed this attractive boy and called him to her, asking what he was. His replies were so apt and so original that she recounted this to her mother and other ladies of the court who immediately invited the peasant lad to come to St. Petersburg, where every advantage would be given him in his studies. Whether this was a fiction of little Sergei's brain or whether there

was any truth in it, I don't know but it was generally believed by all his wild boy friends in Russia. Perhaps his idea in leaving Russia was not as great as Isadora's, for hers was utterly unselfish and entirely meant for his development and betterment.

To accomplish this trip she would dance and earn plenty of money to make their visits very enjoyable ones, whereas Sergei's idea in his mad little brain was to return to Russia with hundreds of costumes, boots, caps, overcoats, silk shirts, pajamas, and much money, all of which he intended to scatter like mad among his wild comrades. Perhaps these thoughts had been well grounded in his mind by his very intimate friend, Mariengoff, who hated and loathed Isadora and wrote the most disgusting articles about her meeting with Yessenin, after her death. In these articles he said she was old and haggard and that Yessenin ordered her around like a dog, made her sit at his feet or wait on him. One has only to know our æsthetic Isadora to know that she might support Yessenin and forgive terrific battles with him but she was never the slave type and that in all their quarrels she was more than his match. Even the place of their meeting so ludicrously described by this Mariengoff was entirely false. Isadora and Sergei met in Moscow as I have described.

It so turned out, however, that Mariengoff and many of Sergei's friends benefited hugely in the numerous costumes, boots, in fact all of Sergei's wardrobe, with which he returned so well supplied and which he shared so generously that at the end he found himself without anything at all.

On their airplane honeymoon from Moscow to Berlin they encountered severe snow storms and violent winds and they barely escaped from serious accidents. They arrived at

Berlin on May 12, 1922, full of joy and happiness. Isadora was radiant. All who knew her at this time still contend she looked scarcely a day older than Sergei. She had grown very slender and very beautiful.

They went at once to the Hotel Adlon which had always been her favorite hotel and declared to the many newspaper people who as usual were there to greet her, "I love the Russian people and intend to go back next year. Nevertheless it is very comforting to return to a place where one can have warm water, napkins, heat, etc. One has other things in Russia, but poor weak humans that we are, we become so accustomed to luxuries, that it is very difficult indeed to give them up. Not that the Russians believe in giving up luxuries. On the contrary, but they believe in luxuries for all and if there is not enough to go around, then every one should have a little less."

Sergei not knowing much of foreign weather and being so very fond of dress of any kind, had himself decked out in a blue suit and white canvas shoes, feeling they were very smart and with his lovely mass of yellow golden hair that stood out like an aureole around his head, it really didn't matter what he wore. He always looked beautiful except when he was in one of his terrible epileptic spells and then he looked like nothing so much in the world as the reincarnation of the devil. His whole personality changed, even the color of his eyes and his hair. One could never believe he was the same man.

Isadora at times found Sergei rather difficult to handle as he had that typical Russian melancholia. Very often she found him standing on the window ledge of his hotel room threatening to cast himself to the street. This only convinced her that he really possessed the true artistic tem-

perament and fearing he was lonely without some of his own compatriots, she engaged two of his friends, also indigent poets, paying them very handsome salaries as secretaries and she even brought them to America.

Also one of the first things Isadora did in Berlin was to give Sergei carte blanche at a tailor's. Some of the results were, to say the least, original and she was more than astonished to find that he had ordered more clothes than any human being could use in a lifetime. However, she merely said, "Well, he is such a child and never having had anything in his life, I couldn't bear to chide him for this."

I believe that in his own village it is customary to sleep on the floor on one rug from the time of birth until death but Sergei took to the niceties of civilization like a fish to water and every day thereafter insisted upon a shampoo, private bath, much eau de cologne, powder, perfume, etc.

Isadora and her young poet would have the most amusing scenes making each other understand, as the best part of their language was signs. They did however develop a sort of pidgin English that only they understood but which seemed to fit every occasion.

They spent a week with Elizabeth at the Elizabeth Duncan School which then occupied the ex-Kaiser's palace at Potsdam.

During the sojourn in Berlin Isadora gave out a great many interviews about Russia and she could not speak highly enough about the American Relief work. She tried in every way to awaken enthusiasm in Berlin for this great project and proposed the use of airplanes to carry food to the Russian peasants in districts where the train service had broken down, but she found no one who would supply

the planes. She herself had no money or she would never have asked any one else to do it.

She told many interesting stories of the sacrifices of the Russian intelligentsia who dauntlessly continued their hard work through hunger and privation. Her great friend, Stanislavsky, head of the Russian Art Theatre, his family and pupils were forced to live on bean porridge. About politics she would have nothing to say as her only association had been with Mr. Lounarcharsky, the Minister of Education and Fine Arts, whom she found to be a most wonderful man, and he had helped her in every way.

From Berlin Isadora went to Brussels, where she danced with tremendous success for three days at the La Monnaie, the Belgian Opera House. Critics wrote that her year in Russia had completely rejuvenated her. She had lost twenty pounds and looked twenty years younger. Isadora humorously declared that lack of food in Russia was responsible and those suffering from embonpoint should make a holy pilgrimage to Moscow if they wished to attain her sylph-like proportions.

The year before leaving for Russia Isadora had danced in Brussels but as she had been greatly offended at some remarks made about her costume she gave one of her characteristic speeches on her last night, declaring that the Belgians were inartistic and worthless and that she was leaving for Russia, where she could express herself freely. Her speech made such a furor that people said she would never dare return. Even her manager refused to have anything to do with this later booking except on a high percentage basis, but to every one's amazement Isadora danced to packed houses, and not only did she enter Belgium as a Soviet citizen but she was welcomed and loved

despite her scathing criticism of the Belgians the year before.

Isadora encountered great difficulties in regard to visés for England, France, and other countries. Her marriage to the young Soviet poet complicated things greatly. She was never denied entrance into any country but had to await the formalities necessary, which was very nerve racking to her, the great artist who was accustomed to being received by the whole world. Her one dream was to dance in all these countries, on to America, and then when she had collected sufficient money to return and work among the children of Russia. Isadora was never a philanthropist. Her great interest in children was for the sake of her art, and her art meant instilling everything that was beautiful and worthwhile into the child life of the world.

In July, 1922, Isadore and her Russian husband were officially notified that there was no objection to their coming to France so long as they did not in any way encourage Red propaganda, and the police had strict orders to exercise the greatest surveillance during their visit. Isadora again insisted that she had nothing to do with politics; she merely wished to organize a great dance recital at the Trocadero to obtain funds for her school in Moscow.

Incidentally Isadora was the first person to enter France as a citizen of the Soviet. This courtesy had been procured for her through her life-long friend, the famous French actress and acknowledged beauty, Cecile Sorel, and also the Minister of Education of France, who was always Isadora's friend.

On July 29th Isadora arrived in Paris from Brussels. Isadora and Sergei spent two very happy months in Paris, with trips to Italy and other places, all forming part of

Sergei's foreign education. They devoted much time and thought to the translation and publication of Sergei's poems, which Isadora had arranged for. They were fêted everywhere and she was as happy as a schoolgirl. Sergei was behaving like an angel, only interested in his poems and his work.

Isadora's American manager, S. Hurok, had been negotiating with her since 1921 with the idea of bringing her Russian School to America. At this time there were twenty-five children, but as this was so soon after the war and there was still a great deal of prejudice against Russia, he had great difficulty in getting permission from the United States government to bring them over, but, when this difficulty was finally out of the way, the Russian government would not permit their leaving, saying they were too young, some of them being only ten or twelve years old. Upon Isadora's leaving Russia in 1922, she cabled Mr. Hurok, saying, "Storms, winds, or snow will never stop me from reaching America."

So, on a Sunday morning in October, 1922, Isadora with her poet husband, and several Russian secretaries arrived on the liner *Paris* from Havre, expecting to be welcomed by a great committee but the only committee was her manager accompanied by a tremendous battery of photographers and newspaper reporters, who made their way to her cabin, where to their utter surprise, as well as hers, the immigration inspector informed her they would have to remain aboard the *Paris* overnight, to be held for inspection, and sent to Ellis Island in the morning for examination by the special Board of Inquiry. There were no explanations as to why she had been detained, but it was

generally understood that instructions came from Washington due to Soviet opinions expressed by Isadora.

Here was one of the world's most celebrated artists, to whom every country had thrown open its doors, thinking no honor too great to crown this wonderful American! The artists of the world had bowed before her; the students and thinkers of all countries agreed that she was the highest expression of art in our day; and yet at the threshold of her own country for whose freedom her grandparents had fought and died, where even the scurviest foreigner with the most mediocre talent was received with open arms, Isadora found the door closed in her face.

This great child of America; this true American in spirit, whose undying love for America was the strongest note in her character; coming back again and again no matter how badly she was treated, begging to teach their children, to give freely this great thing that she had struggled and suffered all her life to prepare. Now like the lowest criminal and most suspicious character, they sent Isadora to Ellis Island. This charming person in her soft, round, white felt hat and red Morocco Russian boots and her long cape was truly a picture that any country might have welcomed.

Her young poet husband and his Russian secretary had prepared a statement which they were to hand America on their arrival, which read: "As we arrive on American territory, gratitude is our first thought. We are the representatives of young Russia, not interested in political questions but only in the field of art. We believe the soul of Russia and the soul of America are about to understand each other and we have come with this one idea to tell of the Russian conscience and to work for the rapprochement of the two great countries. It was during the Russian

famine that America made her great generous gesture. The work of the American Relief Administration is unforgettable and it may be that art will be the medium for a great friendship between these two countries. We greet and thank the American people!"

This little statement was a bit previous but they naturally had no idea they would be refused admission.

By evening, that same day, every paper was carrying headlines about this great artist. Secretary Davis said refusal of New York immigration authorities to permit this party to land was not on orders from the Department of Labor. Other officials of the Department of Labor under which the Immigration Bureau operates, said they knew nothing of the case. They said the matter was entirely in the hands of the authorities in New York. The Board of Inquiry at New York which excludes aliens and others acted on its own initiative. No orders to keep Isadora out of the country were ever sent from Washington. Also Byron H. Uhl, Deputy Commissioner of Immigration, said he did not issue any orders from Ellis Island for Isadora to be detained; Isadora and her party travelled on Russian passports and they had been properly viséd at the United States Consulate in Paris and the Consul had further assured them there would be no trouble with the immigration authorities upon their arrival.

With reference to her dancing, Isadora said, "You seem to appreciate my imitators who make caricatures of my dancing. They dance with their arms and their legs, but not with their souls."

The following day, after two hours at Ellis Island before a special Board of Inquiry, Isadora and her party were released by the immigration officials. It was then

officially stated that she had been detained by order of the Department of Justice because of her long residence in Russia and the gossip that connected her with the Soviet. It was suspected that she might be connected as a friendly courier with that government in bringing papers to this country.

Robert E. Tod, Commissioner of Immigration at Ellis Island, stated, "I don't feel I can tell you of any definite charge if there was one and if there was one, it was not substantiated." Assistant Commissioner of Immigration, H. R. Landis, who presided at the hearing, said the charges were not substantiated.

Among the countless editorials appearing in newspapers at this time was one in the New York *Times* by Anna Fitziu, which read, "Isadora Duncan held at Ellis Island. The Gods may well laugh. Isadora Duncan to whom the school of classical dancing in America owes its foundation, put in the class with dangerous immigrants. Here is an American artist of first rank, a woman whose art is developed to a subtlety almost beyond appreciation, a dancer who puts into her performance not only the exquisite perfection of rhythm and poetry of movement but a vivid and restless imagination that is unsurpassed in the realm of dancing."

Finally they were free and as this gaily attired party crossed from Ellis Island, Isadora said she had been courteously treated and apparently took it all as one huge joke. She said, "They held me because I came from Moscow." When they asked her if she was a classical dancer, her reply was, "I do not know because my dancing is personal." Then they wanted to know what she looked like when she

danced. She told them she could not say because she had never seen herself dance.

Isadora said, "Before I went to Ellis Island I had no idea that the human brain could figure out all the questions that were fired at me. And you can say that I was not in sympathy with the investigation. I have cared for little Russian orphans but I have never had anything to do with politics." Asked if she was a Communist, Isadora declared, "Rot," and turning to her manager, said, "Well, they found me innocent, not guilty."

By this time all the papers were carrying some story about Isadora being held prisoner at Ellis Island, and by noon the next day public opinion had grown very strong indeed over the whole affair.

From the Municipal Ferry they went to their suite in the Waldorf Astoria. Great preparations were made for the celebration. Her family and hundreds of friends gathered around to see her. Isadora was bubbling over with enthusiasm and happiness but she had one great message she wished to give to her friends and to the masses. That was what she had learned in Russia. She could talk about nothing else but Communistic Russia and by the time she was to make her first appearance there had been such publicity about her, that her manager was trembling in his boots about what kind of an audience she would have.

He need not have feared. Her three appearances in New York were tremendous successes. The houses were sold out and the people were clamoring for more. These performances were in Carnegie Hall and Isadora in all her glory danced to the accompaniment of the great Russian Symphony Orchestra with Nahan Franko conducting.

Despite Isadora's tremendous popularity and wonderful

achievements, she kept things at the boiling point all because of her great love for Russia. Wherever Isadora went, the places were continually packed with newspaper reporters and her story was always the same, "Communism is the only solution for the world!" Then Yessenin, after indulging in much champagne, would gather unto himself a large group and give the most fiery speeches about his native land.

From New York Isadora went to Philadelphia, where things were a little more quiet, but not for long. Shortly after she had left New York, her manager, Mr. Hurok, received a long distance call from his advance man in Indianapolis saying that the Mayor of Indianapolis would not permit Isadora to appear the next day, fearing her usual Bolshevistic speeches. Hurok called the Mayor direct, promising him there would be no trouble and saying what a crime it would be to disappoint Isadora's great public, but the next day, in spite of his promise and Isadora's word not to cause any trouble, at the conclusion of her performance she made a most eloquent oration on Communistic Russia. Isadora was then and there refused permission to ever again appear in Indianapolis but she did not care. She had done her bit and had had her say, and after all, that was all that mattered.

Her next stop was Milwaukee and her manager was obliged to warn her that the rest of her tour would be cancelled and she could manage it for herself as best she could if there was the slightest trouble. By keeping all reporters away and advising the hotel clerk to tell any one calling that Isadora was indisposed, he did succeed in keeping order for about twenty-four hours. For a while everything went smoothly, with a few exceptions here and there,

for it was as natural for Isadora to talk about her ideas as it was for others to breathe, and though she did not make many speeches in the place where she danced, she more than made up for it by little talks with reporters at the many private functions held in her honor.

Isadora only danced once in Symphony Hall, Boston. While she was dancing, Yessenin had had the windows opened in the back of the hall and gathered together a great mass of people, whom he told that inasmuch as Boston was known all over the world as the center of culture, refinement, art, and education, they naturally must become acquainted with and know the ideals and platform of young Russia. This was too much for staid and puritanical Boston. Isadora and Yessenin were asked to leave Boston immediately and poor Isadora always felt very keenly about this whole affair.

Her last appearance in Brooklyn was also a sensation. She seemed to be possessed by a demon of the dance and became more and more ecstatic as the performance went on. She was so deeply engrossed with the interpretation of her art, and besides such things were of so little moment to her, that she did not notice her dancing costume was gradually slipping from one shoulder. The audience was thrilled to their finger tips and clamored for more and more. Her pianist, Max Rabinowitch, fearing what Isadora might do next in her mad rapture, quietly disappeared.

Nothing daunted Isadora, so instead of the encore which she intended to give, she made a most enthusiastic speech, airing all the views which she had been compelled to keep to herself for some time. She left nothing unsaid. As a matter of fact, it later turned out that some one had sent her a bottle of bad champagne and as Isadora always took

a glass during intermission and always insisted upon her conductor and manager joining her, they were all taken violently ill, but as nothing could down this spirit of Isadora, she only danced the harder while the others gave up.

During Isadora's tour in America, unfortunately Yessenin's madness began to show itself. He had found that America had not received him as he had expected and he seemed to hold this as a special grudge against Isadora, insulting her and her country on every occasion. There were many scandals reported in the newspapers, some more or less exaggerated, but there was enough truth in them to make life almost impossible.

About this time there was arranged in honor of Yessenin a Russian Jewish Poets' evening. There was a great celebration and many speeches made, but in the midst of the party, Sergei could think of nothing but to insult them as Jews and proceeded to break everything in the place. Afterwards these Russian Jews insisted upon his being deported and only through Isadora's entreaties were they deterred from doing so.

Yessenin's extravagance in buying everything he could see had now completely exhausted Isadora's exchequer and they found themselves without a penny. There were so many tailors knocking on their door morning and evening, threatening to put them in jail, that Isadora was disgusted with life.

Mary Fanton Roberts, a dear devoted friend of Isadora, told me of an exciting episode when she went to say goodbye to her at the Brevoort. At this time Yessenin was still tied up after having wrecked the Russian Jew's apartment and Isadora's only fear was that he would find their revolver which apparently had been mislaid.

While Mrs. Roberts was helping Isadora prepare to leave the hotel, which seemed wise, the door slowly opened. Yessenin had broken away from what seemed cast iron bandages and from the men who were watching him. Slowly but very crazily he entered, brandishing a revolver. For a moment no one knew what to do and then it was found possible to interest him in an evening he had passed at Mrs. Roberts's home when he had read poetry and had seemed quite happy.

While he was talking, Isadora escaped but when he discovered this he became angrier than ever, again rushing down the hall in search of her. Mrs. Roberts followed him out of the room, and found Isadora hiding by the stairway. They both rushed down the stairs not daring to wait for the elevator, but Yessenin, returning to the elevator shaft, rushed down and reached the bottom before them.

Somehow they made their escape and as they reached a cab, Isadora burst into tears. When asked what was the matter, she replied, "It is not for myself, but I was so afraid that the friend who came to comfort me might be frightened or hurt."

Isadora had no thought of her own danger, fearing only that harm might come to her friend. Why Sergei never succeeded in shooting her or himself has always been a marvel to me as he was forever swinging this pistol around in the most careless fashion. But, as always, Isadora forgave him.

She now decided it was time to take her beloved boy back to Russia from whence she had taken him, but she found they hadn't a sou. Instead of taking money back to Moscow, she had been compelled to ask her friends to advance sufficient funds to pay their fare. She was obliged to appeal to Lohengrin, who sent them their transportation to Paris.

Isadora had much to say about this return trip. Sergei was never sober on the boat as he had no difficulty in getting all the drink he wanted. They arrived in Cherbourg on the *George Washington* on February 12, 1923, without a penny.

Isadora claimed she was driven out of America because she asked for aid for the starving children of Moscow. She declared the United States was insane on the questions of Bolshevism, Ku Klux, and prohibition, and no longer was there any freedom in the land of the free. The newspapers, she said, had devoted their columns to printing details about her personal affairs during the tour, what she ate, what she drank, and whom she associated with, but never once touched her art. Materialism was the curse of America.

On February 13, 1923, the Paris papers carried the following: "To-day's Mardi Gras was ruined for two reasons. One was rain and the other that Isadora Duncan has disappeared. Worshippers hoped her presence would prove to be the silver lining to the rain curse which had enveloped the French capital for two days. After she debarked from the *George Washington* at Cherbourg, she remained secluded somewhere in France."

After Isadora had sailed, the New York papers carried many of her comments which were:—

" 'If I had come to this country as a great financier to borrow money, I would have been given a great reception but as I came as a recognized artist, I was sent to Ellis Island as a dangerous character, a dangerous revolutionist.' "

" 'I am not an anarchist or a Bolshevik. My husband and I are revolutionists. All geniuses worthy of the name are. Every artist has to be one to make a mark in the world to-day. Freedom here,' exclaimed Isadora angrily, and giv-

ISADORA DUNCAN AT THE CAFE BOULEVARD DES ANGLAIS, NICE

ing a violent twirl to her flaming scarf, 'Pah, when I got up the other morning I read a story in a newspaper that my beloved Sergei had given me a black eye in a Bronx flat. It's a lie. I don't even know where the Bronx is. I never was there in my life.' "

CHAPTER XI

ISADORA RETURNS FROM AMERICA; YESSENIN DEPORTED FROM FRANCE (1923)

WHILE living quietly in London, one day out of a clear sky I received a wireless, "If you would save my life and reason meet me in Paris, arriving *George Washington.* Love, Isadora."

I gathered together what money I could and left immediately for Paris; arriving in the early morning and fearing the worst, I went to the Grand Hotel and reserved the most modest room possible.

The boat train arrived at 8:30, and almost the first to descend, majestic and glorious, was Isadora. She folded me in her arms, repeating frantically, "Mary, Mary, oh, Mary, at last you have come to save me. I knew you would.

"Now, don't try to understand anything. I will explain later. Only, whatever you do, forget that I'm the great artist. I'm just a nice intelligent person who appreciates the great genius of Sergei Yessenin. He is the artist; he, the great poet." Naturally this made me laugh.

"No, no, Mary, for the love of Heaven, be serious, and do as I ask you or we are all lost. You will understand later, I assure you."

"Well, darling," I replied, "produce this wonderful genius. Where is he?"

"Just a moment," Isadora replied, "don't be impatient. You can't hurry a Russian. They are fetching him out." I asked, "Is he ill?"

"Not exactly," said Isadora. "But he dislikes greatly get-

ting off trains. You must remember he's a very, very great genius, and the guards are coaxing him off." Isadora tried to keep serious, then the most extraordinary thing happened. Four guards appeared, lifting and pulling what seemed like an enormous bundle of elegant furs. They righted the object which took the form of a man, plus an enormously high fur hat, which made him seem very tall and ferocious.

"Sergei, this is my dearest friend. This is Mary," said Isadora.

"Ah, Mary, Mary," came from the bundle of furs, and this said bundle lifted me like a baby and swung me around frantically in a wild Russian embrace, echoing, "My sister, Mary, Mary," and much more in Russian which I didn't understand. I also discovered that this bundle had two twinkling little eyes that shot fire.

Isadora was beaming with delight as she was never sure how Sergei would receive any one and now a scene had been averted. All was harmony and peace for the moment. The porter of the Hotel Crillon, chancing to be the first we met, decided Isadora to go to the Crillon, one of the most exclusive hotels in Paris. Isadora, who had formerly been one of their most honored guests, was received with great ceremony. She refused the palatial suite she had formerly occupied, and decided on two very charming adjoining rooms, declaring one was for me. I told her I had already reserved a room in another hotel, but Isadora insisted that never again would we be separated, never. Her maid, who accompanied her, attended to the luggage, and was given a room not far from our own on the same floor.

Isadora ordered a delicious little dinner, with a light wine. This astonished me because she always drank champagne whenever she could get it. Sergei roared, "Champagne,

champagne," which Isadora very firmly refused to order. Then followed a great argument of some sort in Russian, most of Isadora's I understood, as it resembled English.

Sergei said, "Champagne—to fête his sister," but Isadora told him I hated champagne. (What a libel!) Isadora changed her wild Russian travelling dress for a lovely clinging gown, with a coil of some marvellous rainbow colored silk about her tiny queenly head. Sergei took a little attaché case, which he always carried, Isadora told me, and never let out of his hand, except when he slept, and locked it in the wardrobe in my room.

This amused Isadora very much. She whispered, "Mary, you'll adore him. He's just like a child. He has some toys or other in that case, and guards it like a sacred relic."

"Perhaps it's his money," said I, being a little practical. Isadora roared with laughter, saying, "Mary, that's the funniest thing you ever said. Why, my dear, we haven't a penny in the world, and had it not been for Lohengrin we would still be sitting on the docks in New York. He paid our passage, with a little over, which, by the way, Sergei has in his pockets."

"But your American tour, surely you made money."

"Oh, yes, a lot, but I don't know where it went to. I only know that for the past two weeks we could scarcely pay for our hotel or food. I didn't mind for myself but I hated Sergei getting such an ugly impression of America. It's a terrible shock to an artist. You see, he knows absolutely nothing about money."

At last dinner was served, and very gay and cheery it was! Sergei recited some of his poems, and truly looked like a young god from Olympus, Donatello come to life, a dancing faun. He wasn't still a second, bounding here and

there in ecstasy, now throwing himself on his knees before Isadora, laying his curly head in her lap like a tired child, while her lovely hands caressed him, and a Madonna-like radiance streamed from her eyes.

"Oh, how happy I am, Mary. Isn't he beautiful? If you will only stay and never leave us, we will do marvellous things in Paris. Promise, Mary, never to leave me again."

Every few minutes Sergei would dash down the hall, once for cigarettes, again for matches, although Isadora told him the waiter would fetch anything he needed. I noticed that each time he returned he looked a bit paler, and Isadora more nervous. The last time he didn't come back for quite a while, so Isadora rang for her maid.

The maid then told us he had come several times to her room and ordered champagne, but now he had gone out. Such a look of melancholy settled on Isadora's face that it almost broke my heart. She threw herself on one of the beds and began talking of her trip and her impressions of America, how she had been received, etcetera, as only she could talk. No one in the world has ever conversed with more grace and wit than Isadora. I have often been alone with her for weeks and even months at a time, without ever being bored a second. She never lacked subjects of conversation, and the simplest thing she told wound itself into an absorbing tale, of which one could never hear enough.

"Mary, I might as well tell you the truth. Sergei is just a wee bit eccentric, and the longer he stays out the more eccentric he becomes. In fact if he does not come very soon, it might be as well for us to move to some other part of the hotel where he can't find us."

"Good Heavens, Isadora, what do you mean? I can't believe it possible that he would dare to harm you."

"Well, you see that is one of his eccentricities," she replied. "But, mind you, he doesn't mean it. When he drinks, he's mad, but quite, quite mad, and he thinks I am his greatest enemy. I don't mind in the least his drinking; I wonder every one doesn't do the same to exist in this awful life. Russians don't half do things; when they drink, they drink. I don't mind if he breaks up the whole town, if it pleases him, only I rather dislike being broken up myself."

The idea of any one's possibly hurting Isadora filled me with horror. I couldn't realize it, or believe it. "Why, why do you stand it?" I asked.

"Mary dear, I can't explain it. It would take much too long. And then there's something about it I like, something deep, deep in my life. Have you noticed a resemblance between Sergei and some one you once knew?" Then, pathetically, "Well, never mind, perhaps it's only my imagination. I'll tell you all about it later. If Sergei doesn't come in by twelve, Mary, then I'm afraid we must really go."

"But this is too dreadful, Isadora. Hurry and get dressed and come with me to my hotel."

"I will get dressed, but will not leave here until I am sure about Sergei." Slowly she changed into a walking suit, I urging her to hurry, actually terrified by what I'd heard. Suddenly Isadora's strength seemed to fail her. She asked me to give her brandy which was in her travelling bag. She lay on the bed pale as death. "Isadora," I said, "I will never allow this. Either come with me or there will be a terrible scandal, for if he tries to hurt or even insult you I can't answer for what will happen. I couldn't endure it. Please come at once."

"Oh, Mary, that will be worse than ever. I couldn't bear to have a hair of his golden head hurt. Can't you see the

resemblance? He's the image of little Patrick. Patrick would look like that one day, and could I allow him to be hurt? No, you must help me to save him; get him back to Russia. He'll be all right there. He is a great genius, a great poet and they know how to take care of their artists."

"We'll talk it over to-morrow, Isadora, only come with me now."

"No, I can't leave until I hear him coming. I'll know by the sound of his voice how he is."

Hardly had she spoken when the most awful noise one ever heard came down the hall, as if a whole troop of Cossacks were marching in, horses and all. Isadora jumped up. I caught her by the hand and pulled her into my room, locking the door, and when Sergei had entered her room and begun pounding the connecting door, I dragged Isadora out and down the hall, and we flew like fiends down the five flights of stairs. At the entrance Isadora would not leave until she told the concierge that her husband was ill and to please go up and take care of him as we were going for a doctor and to be very, very gentle with him, as he was quite ill. The concierge assured her he would.

We jumped in a taxi, and Isadora insisted upon finding a doctor, and a Russian doctor, if possible. The one we tried to find was out of town, and then she came with me to the Grand Hotel, in an exhausted condition. Here another little situation awaited us. The concierge came up after us, and pounding at my door, said that the room had been taken for only one person and I could not have another person in. I tried to send him away quietly, telling him my friend was ill, not wishing Isadora to hear the brute, but nothing would do; he screamed and yelled. So I ordered him to send up the night manager, to whom I explained things.

After this, Isadora telephoned to the Crillon, and the maid informed her that six policemen had just smashed in the door, taking Monsieur to the Police Station, after he had threatened to shoot them and broken every bit of furniture in the place, pushing a dressing table and a couch through the window without the precaution of first opening it. He had tried to break the communicating door, believing Isadora was still there, and beat up the hotel porter who tried to stop him. Fortunately his revolver was in the attaché case in my room, otherwise there might easily have been murder.

Isadora almost swooned when she heard this. "What shall we do, Mary? I haven't a cent. Sergei has the last of the money Lohengrin sent us, and that is only a few dollars."

She insisted on again looking for a doctor, whom we found on applying at the Majestic Hotel. We took him with us to the Police Station, Isadora explaining how these spells came on. After our arrival, while the doctor was trying to examine this mad man, Sergei kept raving about the attaché case, saying it contained his poems.

The doctor now declared he was an epileptic and most dangerous; that, under no condition, should he be set at liberty. This last blow completely prostrated Isadora. We returned to the Hotel Crillon at 4 A.M. more dead than alive.

The entire hotel was in a terrible state of excitement. Several guests had run out in their night clothes, thinking the war had begun again, and they were being bombarded. This was too much for Isadora's sense of humor; she began to laugh hysterically at the idea of a young Bolshevik Russian (if he had any political creed, which I doubt) frightening the peaceful American guests out of their lives.

This laughter didn't take very well with the hotel manager, however, who had been very sympathetic but now became very bitter, saying if she would kindly pay for the damage he would be greatly obliged, and she could find another hotel, for she couldn't possibly stop there. And really there was no place in those rooms to stay, the beds were broken, the springs on the floor, the sheets torn into shreds, every bit of mirror or glass broken in bits—in fact, it really looked like a house after a bomb had hit it.

I took the manager aside and told him Miss Duncan was not laughing at what had happened, but from pure shock. This calmed him a bit. I told him we would leave the first thing in the morning; that everything would be attended to. He agreed, provided Yessenin would not return. We assured him there was not the slightest danger of that.

After retiring to our room Isadora took a drink of brandy, and wanted to know what there was to do now; that she would never allow Sergei to be confined in an asylum. She would rather take the chance of his killing her. We had the wardrobe door opened, and found the attaché case. The police had given her Sergei's keys but with a sensitiveness that was one of the chief characteristics of this lovely being, she hesitated a long time before prying into his personal affairs. I suggested there might be money in the case but she said there couldn't be, for he had none.

At last she opened it and to her amazement found it filled with American money, all in small amounts; even silver, about two thousand dollars. "My God, Mary, can it be possible I have been harboring a viper in my bosom? No, I can't believe it, poor little Sergei. I'm sure he didn't really know what it was all about. Never having had money in his life and seeing it scattered about so lavishly, his peasant

cunning came to the fore, and unconsciously he decided to save some of it. Most likely for those who needed it so badly in his own country." (And so it proved afterwards, when he scattered his money wild and wide with a prodigality even greater than Isadora's.) "And to think he had this money all the time I was being driven mad by a tailor, who threatened to have me arrested if I did not pay his bill for two suits for Sergei."

This really was too much. I called for the manager. We paid the damage and left the hotel, taking Isadora's trunks with us. We left Sergei's after Isadora had opened them and found them stuffed with not only dozens of suits, shirts, and linens, but half of Isadora's clothes, which she thought she had lost from time to time.

We went to the Hotel Reservoir at Versailles. There Isadora went to bed very ill with a high temperature. The doctor came to see her after he had again seen Sergei and asked if she objected to his being kept in an institution. The police would free him only on condition that he leave the country immediately. Isadora sent the maid with the last money that she had in the world. We had purchased two tickets, and the maid accompanied Sergei to Berlin, where he had many friends and where the Russian government was represented. Between the time the maid left us and nine o'clock when the train left for Berlin, Isadora lived in terror. Sergei got all his trunks, including the attaché case, with only enough money to pay his way to Berlin.

CHAPTER XII

OUR AUTO TRIP TO GERMANY (1923)

AFTER a few days Isadora could no longer stand the solitude of the country, so we moved into the Hotel du Rhin, where I explained to the Director, who had known us for years, that it might be weeks before we would be in a position to pay our bills. He said that it was quite all right; we could stay as long as we cared to, under the condition that Yessenin did not come there, since they could not have a scandal. I assured him there would be none.

Isadora was still confined to bed with fever, and could not be left alone a second, night or day. She was bombarded continually with telegrams from Sergei and his friends in Berlin, saying he would certainly commit suicide unless Isadora returned to him. Sergei's telegrams usually read like this: "Isadora browning ["browning" meant "shoot" to him] darling Sergei lubish moya darling scurry scurry" (meaning "hurry—hurry")—five or six telegrams a day; all of which kept Isadora's temperature soaring.

The doctor could do nothing to make her sleep. At last she said, "Mary, dear, if you are really my friend, find a way to take me to Sergei or I will die. I can't live without him. I don't care what he has done. I love him and he loves me. The thought that some harm may come to him drives me mad. Find out where we can get a car to take us to Berlin."

Heavens! here we were without a penny, yet she wanted to

go by auto to Berlin. Nothing ever seemed impossible to her. She declared she could not get in a train.

A few nights before we went to Berlin, Isadora, who was terribly nervous, decided after dinner that we would go to Montmartre, as she was tired of the hotel. I refused absolutely to go with her as I thought the Montmartre cabarets were no place for two lone females. She said, "Very well, if you wish to be obstinate," and drove me to the hotel, where I went to bed and she went off alone. I fully believed she would return in a few moments and I was greatly surprised when she had not returned at three o'clock in the morning.

Finally she came in, bringing with her a very young, beautiful Italian woman who told me she was a movie star. Isadora ordered some food and wine and we sat talking for hours.

It seems Isadora had gone alone to this cabaret and an American who sat at a table nearby had made some very rude remarks to which a Frenchman and another party had taken exception and there was a general row. In the midst of all this, the Italian girl had thrown her arms about Isadora, saying, "I have seen you dance so many times and I adore you. I have a little daughter I want to give you for your school."

This so touched Isadora that she brought her home, and as we had a sitting room and two bedrooms, she suggested that I give this girl my room and I sleep in hers, which I did.

We had scarcely closed our eyes when we were awakened by this girl rapping at our door. "Please, will you come and see that I have taken nothing, as I wish to leave."

We were so astonished we could not understand it and said, "Why don't you sleep until morning, then have a bath and a good breakfast before leaving?"

To our utter amazement, this is what we heard in reply: "How do you think I make my living? Do you think I can waste all this time? And I have been paid nothing for this evening."

At this the young person flounced out of the hotel very indignant.

Truly, one meets all kinds in Paris.

The next day we sent for an old rogue who had already loaned Isadora a small sum on her very valuable Carrière paintings, which she treasured more than anything. After much disagreeable discussion he agreed that if Isadora would sign certain papers, he could get a great friend of his to rent her a car, chauffeur and everything complete very, very cheap, and would give her 60,000 francs.

Isadora now got well miraculously. She telegraphed Sergei to be of good cheer; she was coming.

Everything seemed beautifully arranged, but then we hadn't counted on our friend, the money-lender. Each day his percentage increased, and the sum he was to give her diminished. Finally, the last day, as we were all packed and ready at noon, sitting with our bonnets on, waiting for the car to come, he showed up, rubbing his hands, which by this time should have been worn out with the friction, to explain that he could not get the entire sum for three or four days, and if she would wait, he would get it; otherwise she could get part of it on her return.

There was nothing to do about it. Isadora would not wait another day for God or man. The place was full of newspaper correspondents by this time, with Isadora trying every way to get off secretly. The night before an amusing incident occurred. Isadora and I had been dining with two young artists, Walter Shaw and Murphy, and as we re-

turned to the hotel, one of the newspaper men got in the elevator with us. Isadora, pretending not to know him, turned to Murphy and said, "Sergei," and then something in Russian, and at the same time pinching poor Murphy's arm until he squirmed. The reporter beaming, said, "Now, here, Miss Duncan, you might as well admit that Sergei is in Paris." Isadora shook her head violently, "No, no."

"Well, we know he is, and if you will not tell us, we will hand in the story anyhow. We know when he arrived, and at the moment he is hiding in this hotel. We'd rather have you tell us, for you know the police have forbidden him to come to Paris."

Isadora pretended to be terribly frightened, and begged him to come quietly to her suite, there pushing Murphy into the bathroom. She whispered to him, "Make a terrible scene!"

Isadora sat down to reason with the reporter, saying how terrible it would be if they found out Sergei was in Paris—that he was such a desperate character, and then began the most awful noise. Murphy had thrown over an empty dinner tray that was standing in the bathroom, followed by a few bottles smashed on the floor, and the breaking of an electric bulb which sounded exactly like a revolver shot. Isadora grabbed the reporter's arm, begging him to protect her and he promised not to say a word about it. As Murphy ran out of the bath, the reporter ran out of the hotel. All this amused Isadora greatly.

Naturally when the story came out the next day, the place was crowded with reporters, while the hotel management indignantly denied that there had been a scandal of any kind, except that a tray had accidentally fallen on the floor, but Yessenin was not and had not been in the hotel.

And amidst all this excitement we rolled out of the Place Vendôme triumphantly at 8:30, having accepted the sum of money the rogue was willing to give us.

Now began one of the strangest journeys. Isadora must have thought herself the Flying Dutchman. She acted like a person demented; that nothing could stop. First the wretched car and chauffeur would go no farther than Strasbourg, leaving us completely in the lurch. Nothing daunted, Isadora immediately hired another, which almost at the moment of starting ran into the side of a bridge, breaking down. This forced us to stay the night in Strasbourg.

Isadora would not sleep a wink and was in a state of the wildest excitement about our mishap! She decided not to go to bed but to go from restaurant to restaurant, night club to night club, anywhere and everywhere for excitement. And when I remonstrated with her, she replied in the most pathetic way, "Why does no one ever let me enjoy myself as I like? I am doing no harm; I who pass my life giving happiness to others. Why must I always sit on a pedestal like a Chinese god?"

This silenced me. So we continued madly the whole night through, and only returned to the hotel after the very last place in Strasbourg closed.

It seemed to me I had just closed my eyes when Isadora's voice broke through my slumber. "Come on, Mary, up and on. We're on a great adventure, dear. We can't afford to waste so much time sleeping."

Heavens! I thought I would go to sleep standing up. So, on we went, I grumbling a bit, but Isadora was like the sun; she smiled and you would go to your death foolishly, feeling you were doing some great brave deed. She always made you feel so wonderful, that you were a superior sort of God-

sent being. Not that she ever stooped to flattery, but she had her way, and no words could ever explain it. And to me she was always as near perfection as any one on earth could ever be.

All through Germany we saw nothing but the greatest suffering. Women were climbing on milk wagons begging for just a drop of milk. In the small town where we stopped for dinner, the people gathered in the inn, insulting us. They could not even afford a glass of beer, and we could drink wine. Besides, what business had Frenchies coming there at all? As Isadora got quite ill from this, the proprietor invited us into his private dining room, but I refused to go until I had had it out with the chap who was doing most of the talking.

We left immediately after dinner and arrived at midnight, high in the mountains, when both our car and chauffeur refused to go any farther. A dismal hotel gathered us in, and I without making any plans threw myself exhausted on the bed. But within an hour Isadora had arranged with the landlord, and another car was at the door. She came tripping in with a bottle of champagne in one hand, a glass in the other, followed by a waiter with some sandwiches. "Up, Mary, up," she said, and we started at once. Isadora continued, "I have a presentiment that Sergei is dying; that he has shot himself." I was so tired and sleepy that I really didn't mind if he had, but Isadora was beside herself, and I thought if she could endure it, so could I. It was one of the terrible nights of my life.

We had only gone about thirty miles, when the engine began to spit and choke and this continued all the while we climbed the mountain. For some unknown reason, the chauffeur had forgotten to provide himself with lights. It

was like an awful nightmare. A terrible fog had settled down and to make things more interesting, Isadora urged him on to full speed all the time, I begging him to be careful, no matter whether we ever got there or not.

We arrived in a little village as dawn approached. I said that if all the poets in the world died, I was going to sleep, right then and there. Isadora agreed, as she saw I was very determined. We slept until noon, and then up again and on our way.

In spite of Isadora's anxiety about Sergei, she couldn't resist passing through Bayreuth, although it took us hours out of our way. No, we must once more embrace Frau Cosima, and visit the Schwarz Adler Hotel. I was perfectly willing to make this little trip; so we started, but at last our Pegasus, not being of the swiftest, brought us into Bayreuth at midnight; surely too late to embrace Frau Wagner.

Isadora was radiant at being again in Bayreuth. In fact, Isadora was always happy in an automobile going anywhere, or in a flying machine. Swift movement was as necessary to her as breathing. She only lived when going like mad, resting now and then for food and drink, which usually consisted of rare roast beef, salad, and champagne. I must admit I was almost as fond as she of touring, and also of being again in Bayreuth. As we could not see Frau Cosima, we begged the host of the inn to be kind enough to send to her in the morning one hundred of the most beautiful American Beauty roses possible to find, with love from both of us. We afterwards received a charming letter from Siegfried in the name of his mother, his family and himself.

I was all for staying over there, but Isadora had struck up a conversation with a very charming young man at the

next table, who was on his way to his home in Leipzig. He had a marvellous hundred horse-power car at the door, being a racer himself. He offered to take us; so we bade goodbye to the old tin can we had been riding in and started for Leipzig at one A.M.

Isadora sat beside our host who drove the car, and if I was anxious the night before, I was doubly anxious now. As she kept urging him on to greater speed, for no other reason than to tease me, and as he was nothing loath to show off the speed of his car and his fine driving, I passed a few unhappy hours. I cannot understand how we were not killed twenty times over. Finally, something white loomed up in the distance, but no sooner seen than we hit it and descended on the other side. It was a load of broken stone used for repairing the roads and we hadn't noticed that the road had been barred, but the car righted itself and started on its way as if nothing had happened. There is some God who protects fools and motorists.

Isadora was a bit shaken by this, and in fact quite exhausted, as she had slept but a few hours in days and days. At my declaration to get out and walk, she decided to quiet our racing chauffeur and we finally arrived at Leipzig in the morning, looking like nothing on earth and the young man madly in love with Isadora, whom it seems he had often seen dance.

He left us at a lovely hotel and after a breakfast and bath, we slept until noon, when renting another car, we started on the last lap of our journey and arrived without further mishaps in Berlin at 10 P.M.

CHAPTER XIII

MAD LIFE IN BERLIN (1923)

AS we drove up in front of the Hotel Adlon in Berlin, a flying leap landed Sergei in our car, he having bounded straight on to the engine, over the chauffeur's head into Isadora's arms, and there they stood embracing, while his poet friend, whom I had never seen, jumped onto the other side of the car, madly greeting me, pressing my hand and kissing me on both cheeks, all the time screaming the wild words of some poem which they had composed.

Naturally a few of the genteel Berlin folks gathered about to enjoy this pastoral scene, but our party, with the exception of the chauffeur, neither remembered the street, the people, nor the raised platform of the automobile, remembered nothing but that Sergei had been saved. There he was in the flesh and bone, his golden hair waving in the electric lights. He had thrown his cap away as he sprang—an expensive but beautiful gesture. For what did he now need a hat? His love, his darling, his Isadora was here, so away with the hat. He would just as quickly have thrown his coat and boots after it.

This was not posing; these two exaltés were beyond the consciousness of their surroundings. The police finally disbanded the onlookers, and by a little urging we persuaded the lovers to descend; but as to what hotel they wished to go, or whether the poets had engaged rooms for us, we could get no answer of any kind. In desperation I decided to try

the one in front of which we stood, but our Paris réclame had travelled more quickly than we, and had reached even the ears of the hotel managers, and when he saw the *heilige* Isadora madly clasped in the arms of her golden-haired poet, he decided there and then, much to his regret, they had not even a tiny single room left in the hotel. I thought it rather heartless of him, but out we trudged and all piled into the auto that the chauffeur was trying to hide from the curious onlookers a few leaps up the street, away from the brilliant hotel lights.

We wandered on to the Palace Hotel, where the other Russian poet, Sergei's great friend (in top boots, breeches and marvellous red cloth tunic caught around his slender waist with an embossed silver buckle, all topped off by a high fur-trimmed hat), accompanied me. I pushed by him; letting them think he might be my guide, secretary, or anything they liked. I asked if they had reserved a suite for Miss Isadora Duncan which had been telegraphed for, and with exceeding courtesy and politeness the manager assured us that they had never received our precious telegram. (But this didn't surprise me, as we had never sent one.) Nevertheless, a suite there was for Miss Duncan, even though they had to turn out thirty people.

Isadora and Sergei leisurely entered at this moment, followed by the chauffeur and several porters carrying the baggage, not having waited to see whether there were rooms or not, believing once you're in, you're in, and it's difficult to get you out.

Several other Russians, whom I had not noticed before, but anyway belonging to our party, carrying several kinds of musical instruments, all fell in line, and while we ascended in the elevator, they wildly scrambled up the stairs. The

most surprised expression came over the manager's face as he smiled gently but a little uneasily at this unexpected addition to our party.

As we were shown into the royal suite, the manager asked how many we were, and how many rooms we required? Isadora with a magnificent sweep of her arm indicated the whole crowd. "Rooms for all," she said. "They are my party."

With a gasp, I thought of our few thousand francs, but as we had heard strange rumors along the road of hundreds of thousands of marks being given for a few francs, we thought we could live forever on that amount. As a matter of fact, before we ended our journey, we got millions of marks for a few francs, but unfortunately, you could not buy much for a million.

"Couchet, couchet," yelled Sergei, meaning "eat." "Da, da, couchet," echoed Isadora. "Couchet."

Like magic we all spread out in different rooms to wash up and change, while the first Russian poet hurriedly telephoned to several Russians who had not heard of our arrival, and who would not have liked to miss the festivities. General rejoicing with regal food was not part of the daily curriculum in the artistic part of Russian Berlin. Then too, the Soviet Minister must be invited, and for this Isadora had to be found, as he must necessarily be asked by her personally.

They all came. I think several only heard of it by accident, not being on our calling list. Like a fairy dream the table spread itself out in the middle of the great salon. For we learned later that we had the small as well as the great salon, all containing many easily breakable and expensive things, but of that anon.

Isadora decided this was to be a Russian evening, with

only Russian food and drink, and it was. I am prepared to tell the entire world never was there a more Russian evening since the world began. Two side tables were loaded with Russian hors-d'œuvre; never anywhere have I tasted such delicacies. But the Russian custom, and upon which Isadora insisted, that every one should drink three glasses of vodka, one after another before the hors-d'œuvre, was almost my finish. How I kept my head after that, if I did, is beyond me. The Russians who had balakaikas played them, and sang; all the others breaking in on the refrain. Beautiful it was, indeed! We were transported to the land of ecstatic sadness, for nothing in the world is more wonderfully melancholic than Russian music.

Dinner was served, after it seemed to me we had eaten and drunk enough to feed a regiment for seven weeks. But all this was only to whet the appetite for the real feast.

Isadora now came from her room like a rainbow, more beautiful than I had ever seen her (except, perhaps, the day of her death). Happiness streamed like a radiance from her; Sergei knelt in front of her, tears streaming down his face, calling her a thousand beautiful, tender, Russian names; and the entire company in turn knelt before her, kissing her hands; which was really very touching. How happy we were! A group of wild, carefree, homeless persons—for what did they reckon, or care or understand, of what had happened or was going on in the world, these expatriated people? Artists, every one, paying homage to the greatest artist of all!

Sergei was well content, for while they bowed before Isadora, they prostrated themselves before him, their poet, their Yessenin, their Sergei. Oh, yes, that was something they understood, and if he wanted to be a "scandaliste" and a

"hooligan," which he certainly was, why not? Genius has liberties; can do what it likes. How dare ordinary mortals say what the God-sent ones shall do, or how behave?

The soup and fish, podjolski cutlets and others followed, each with its appropriate wine; several guests were beginning to slip from their chairs, when Sergei got up to recite one of his poems. As he spoke, it passed through them all like an electric shock. He sprang on the table, and although at the time I did not understand one word of Russian, I too was carried off by the force and pathos of his voice and expression.

Poor little Sergei! Poor wild mad little boy! He was only twenty-seven.

After the poem, Isadora and he danced a Russian dance, the rest of us clapping and keeping time by hand. The Soviet Minister, who sat at the head of the table, was by this time reclining on a sofa on which he seemed to have some difficulty staying, as both he and the sofa were rather overstuffed types, and with every slip off, all lent a hand and shifted him back on.

Things were going splendidly, if uproariously, when Isadora chanced to overhear an animated conversation between Sergei and another poet about Anna. Now Anna means "she" in Russian, but Isadora's Russian being far from perfect, thought they were discussing some new love of Sergei's, whom she believed the other poet was teasing Sergei about. She upbraided the young poet, said she knew all about Anna, which threw Sergei into one of the most violent fits of madness and the show was on. Really, if these scenes had not been so disastrous to both of them, they would have been laughable.

Things began to fly. Sergei always threw the first thing

he got his hand on, irrespective of what or at whom. Unfortunately for the dignity of the State, the Minister's head, which at that moment had not had the good luck to have slipped off the sofa, caught the first plate of fish. Nothing serious, but sufficient to irritate a minister. Personally, I had the bad taste to roar with laughter, which prevented me from having my passport viséd afterwards, when I wished to accompany Isadora to Russia.

My merriment didn't last long, for before we knew quite what had happened, there wasn't a thing left whole in the apartment. Sergei meanwhile hurled abuse at Isadora and myself, which mattered not to me, as I did not understand a word of it. Three or four of his friends tried to hold him down. They might as well have tried to stop the waves of the ocean, such strength as this boy had in these paroxysms was beyond belief. I saw many of these scenes afterwards, and they always began in the same way. He would be sitting eating, or talking quite naturally, when suddenly without the slightest warning his face grew deadly pale, and the pupils of his rather pale blue eyes dilated, until the entire eye looked like a burned black coal, terrible to see. Sometimes if you caught him quickly enough, and had the courage to do it, you could avert the crisis by asking him to sing. Dozens of times this ruse worked, but it only calmed him for a while, as it always broke out again shortly afterwards. It often gave Isadora the chance to get out of a dangerous place or position, and also made an exit possible, as his first gesture was always to lock all the doors and pocket the keys. This he did on the night of the Russian dinner, but so quickly and skillfully, we were all prisoners before we had realized what had happened.

Strong, live, young Russians he threw about the room like

DRAWING OF ISADORA DUNCAN BY CLARA

balls, or baggage on shipboard in a storm. Isadora had at first enjoyed the wildness of it. What had come over the gentle, timid Isadora? Russia had surely changed her, changed her character. I do believe that if he had never attacked her, she would never have resented these spells, as they were so in keeping with the awful inner torment from which she never ceased to suffer. They had the same soothing effect on her as a mad, racing auto or airplane—the utter disregard for everything conventional and for all life that had so brutally destroyed her, seemed to give her some respite from sorrow.

The manager and half the porters in the hotel were banging at the doors, but no one paid the slightest attention to them, so they finally got in through the bathroom and opened the doors for the others. I often thought that it was the uniform of the porters that in some way brought Sergei to his senses, remembering so keenly the uniform that had taken him away just a few weeks before, in Paris.

The manager was in an awful state, with everybody trying to explain at once that an accident had happened. We got him out as quickly as possible, for fear that he might see how much damage had been done, but he saw enough, judging from the amount of our bill.

No one made the slightest move to depart, and Isadora and Sergei, now like lambs, went to their room. I locked myself in the room on the other side of the salon, and so far as I know, the others sang and ate until morning, Sergei joining them now and them, for he never slept at night but kept wandering around until morning. The morning after, we got a very polite note from the management, saying the suite was engaged for that afternoon, and would we please be out of there by twelve noon? In spite of everything I

could explain to the management, we had to leave but did not get out before five, when we were all happy, harmonious and smiling once again.

We went for a long automobile ride, and on returning went to a new hotel. We found quite a group of young Russian poets and artists waiting to welcome us, all ready to begin another evening, but the Minister never came again. We went to see him one day, but he was quite ill and could not see us, and when I later asked for my visé, he refused to sign it. Of course he could not refuse Isadora's, for she was married to Sergei.

Again there was great rejoicing, and the dear old music master whom I had last seen the evening before lying under the table to avoid the flying objects, gaily playing his ukulele and singing, now beamed happily, still carrying his darling musical instrument from which he was never separated. I believe he slept with it in his arms. Cocktails flowed merrily; then began the hors-d'œuvre and the vodka. This time I let them try the three without my help. Now followed a sumptuous repast. I can't imagine how the German hotels got all those Russian dainties, fresh things which one would not expect to find even in Russia. In the middle of the dinner, Sergei began to sing a bit wildly and he and Isadora danced again a Russian dance. Suddenly he took her aside, saying only Russians could dance that. He grabbed one of the boys and they danced like demons, leaping in the air until they almost reached the ceiling. Such a ballet would have had a great success anywhere. Then, again the symptoms of one of his paroxysms of rage began to be evident.

Isadora whispered to me, "Now, Mary, dear, don't be frightened at anything I do. I am going to cure him of all

this nonsense. Remember, no matter how queer I seem, or what extravagance I commit, I am just pretending," and so she was, at the beginning, but she got caught in the whirlpool, and could not stop when she wanted to. Sergei began by insulting her dance. He would adopt any theme that would lead on to a crisis, and everybody trembled and fell before him. But to-night Isadora gave him back as much as he said, although he had all the advantage of brilliancy and wit, which was understood by the others, while Isadora suffered because she spoke a language of which they didn't understand a word. So she adopted a more simple method of repeating any insulting word she knew in Russian, over and over. And as there were very few she added the names of animals like pigs, dogs, cows, etc.; at first this, with Isadora's amusing American Russian accent, caused great amusement, so that even Sergei shrieked with laughter, and for a while the storm blew over, he jumping over the table, taking Isadora in his arms, madly kissing her eyes and her hair and hands, and even her beautiful feet. But remembering afterwards that she had called him some kind of a dog, he started again.

In the meantime, much champagne had been drunk. Russians never cease drinking, once they begin, until the end, whatever that end may be. Sergei broke into a terrible storm; even his best friends were frightened. When one of these attacks was on, friend and foe were the same to him. He caught one end of the cloth and in a flash all of the dinner and the service was scattered to the four winds, hitting whom it would on its way. Everybody gathered up as many plates and dishes as they could and placed them on the table. Isadora said to me, "How history repeats itself!" remembering when another person years before had upset

our dinner in the same sudden but effective manner, in Frankfort-am-Main.

She whispered to me, "Remember what I said; there is a sure cure for him to-night. I am sick of playing keeper while he has all the fun."

So she lightly picked a plate from the table, shying it at a picture on the wall. It was an awful crash, which shocked the gentle Isadora more than any one. For a moment Sergei thought he had done it himself, but when this was followed by a crash of a decanter into the fireplace, which made an explosion like a gun, he became very concerned indeed. "Pooh, it's great fun," cried Isadora. "If I had known how you have enjoyed yourself, I would have joined in long ago." Then a perfect tornado began, until nothing was left in the room unbroken.

I tried to calm Isadora, who at intervals kept winking at me, whispering, "It's all right; don't be frightened. I know what I'm doing," but she was quite beyond knowing anything, and just as mad now as Sergei. The terrible strain of these outbursts of his for more than two years had begun to tell on her nerves, and at the first object thrown she had become hysterical, semiconscious of what she was doing but unable to control it. Again the management and all the porters in the hotel came, when Sergei, with the cunning of a lunatic, at once became quite quiet, and insisted that some one call a doctor. "Isadora, sick. Doctor! Doctor!" he repeated. They finally believed him and sent for a doctor. I wonder if he hadn't meant to have her taken away, as he had been taken away in Paris. A very charming doctor came, but in spite of all my protests gave Isadora a hypodermic, which made her deadly ill. I suggested he give one

to Sergei, but this bright boy kept very quiet and gentle while the doctor was present.

I cleaned out the room of all but Sergei's two great friends, the other poet and music master. I tried to close the door of Isadora's room to keep him from her, but he made such a scandal, declaring that he would call the police, that I was poisoning Isadora, that finally I had to open the door. He insisted upon awakening her, which I could in no way prevent, except perhaps by killing him, which I suppose I should have done. He kept waking her every few minutes the rest of the night, and once when I went into the salon to get her some water, he locked and bolted the door. What agony of soul I suffered! I could hear Isadora begging him to let her alone, to let her be! At last I tried his ruse, and said, "If you don't open that door, I'll call the police and have them break in."

He opened it but never ceased to hurl abuse at me, but too frightened to dare touch me. He sat with his friends the rest of the night, singing sad peasant songs, and enjoying themselves hugely. They tried unsuccessfully to get more champagne, but without avail. I must have fallen asleep on the couch in the salon, for about eight in the morning, Sergei threw himself on his knees before me sobbing piteously, explaining in his pidgin Russian-English, that Isadora was gone, gone forever, perhaps a suicide.

I looked wildly through all the rooms, in the corridors, everywhere, but there was not a trace of her. I went to my room and sent for the manager, asking him if Miss Duncan had taken a room in another part of the hotel, as she so often did during one of these scenes, to avoid him through fear of her life. They told me that Miss Duncan had left

the hotel at six o'clock and asked them to tell me not to be frightened. This message reassured me but little, knowing the state she was in.

For hours and hours I went about, trying to think of a way out of this. I felt I must induce Isadora to leave Sergei, even if he killed himself. Better that than that he should kill her. But I feared she would never leave him. About eleven o'clock I had a note secretly handed to me by the maid, begging me to try to get a bag with a few necessary toilet articles and clothes, for she had left without anything, but not to let Sergei know where she was. I told Sergei not to worry and to stop crying, which he had never ceased to do since the morning, and that I would go out and look for Isadora, and the best thing he could do would be to sleep. In these after spells he was just like a pathetic little child, until your heart ached with pity for him.

I took a taxi and went out to Potsdam, where I found Isadora sitting in a well-known restaurant. She had just ordered lunch, hoping that I would come, as I had all the money we possessed and she could not have paid for anything. After lunch we walked over to find a hotel. She could hardly put one foot in front of the other and seemed utterly dazed. It must have been the drug, which was only now taking effect. She asked for Sergei, and told me that he had said something so horribly brutal about her children that she simply had to leave and walked out of the hotel like a mad woman. He might do what he liked, and say what he liked, but to touch the bleeding open wound in her heart was too much. He spoke constantly of his own three children, one by his first wife before he was eighteen, and the others by his second wife, who was now Frau

Meyerhold, the wife of the famous producer, to whom Sergei gave her and the two children.

I begged Isadora to return with me to Paris, and again begin seriously to work. Or, if not, she should go at once to Russia to her own school. But she must leave Sergei. She replied it would be like deserting a sick child, and that she could never, never do it. She would take him back to his native land, where there were many just like him. They understood and loved him for his talent, and would always be kind.

After she had bathed and slept a while, it was about nine o'clock when she could no longer resist telephoning Sergei. He was so repentant he completely won her heart. She told him to take a car with his two friends and bring all the baggage. The porter should accompany them with the bill which she would pay when they arrived. When this bill was paid, there was scarcely any money left.

When they came, I explained that whatever they intended doing, they had to do at once. Sergei and his poet friend said they could get what money was necessary, and Isadora told them to do so if they could and she would repay it the instant she got back to Paris.

A general family caucus then took place and Isadora decided we should all go to Russia. But first it was absolutely necessary to go to Paris to rent or sell the Rue de la Pompe house, furniture, etc.; then take her clothes and books with her to Moscow, where she intended going for life, where she would continue her school in spite of all difficulties, and where Sergei would write marvellous poems. Dreams, beautiful dreams!

Now, how to get to Paris, where Sergei was barred, or how

get the others visés on their red Russian passports? However, nothing daunted, Isadora said, "Oh, Mary will get us all through."

Sergei and his friend borrowed four thousand francs and they thought it would be a lovely idea to go into Berlin to the Gypsy Restaurant, where they had a marvellous Russian gypsy singer, who had always sung for the Czar, this party being arranged against my advice and wishes.

We paid in advance for the auto which was to take us as far as Strasbourg the next morning. This I insisted upon, otherwise I refused to go a step. We still had a one-thousand franc bill and some other small money. Foolishly I gave it to Isadora. I was getting pretty well fed up with the whole expedition, and stated that I refused to take any part, being only an onlooker in the future.

Isadora begged me by our lifelong friendship not to desert her, and I said, "I will see you back to Paris, where I absolutely must be on the thirteenth, as my son arrives from America."

We went to the Gypsy Restaurant and had dinner very quietly. After they closed, which they were obliged to do by the police regulations at twelve o'clock, they invited us into a large back room they had behind the restaurant, and where the entire gypsy group gathered around us, singing their peasant songs with Sergei as the ringleader, until three o'clock in the morning.

Sergei had told us they invited us, and so we were greatly surprised when they handed us a bill for a considerable number of marks. Isadora, who never disputed a bill in her life, gently handed out the thousand-franc note. As the change came back, Sergei grabbed it and went around

MARY DESTI

From a photograph taken in her studio in New York

among the troupe, throwing hundreds of marks here and there, but I had seen him stuff a great bundle in his coat pocket, and as he got up to dance with one of the gypsies, I took this roll out without saying a word to any one but Isadora.

CHAPTER XIV

OUR ADVENTUROUS RETURN TO PARIS (1923)

THE next morning we were the most motley crowd that ever went on an automobile trip. Isadora and I sat on the back seat, the music master and Sergei on the two extra seats, with the other poet and chauffeur in front. It was a great open car and all the luggage on earth, it seemed to me, was piled on top or under us. The poor music master was completely submerged. All one could see of him was his thin, long, straggly hair, which nearly covered his face.

Then the poet still in his red Russian blouse, high fur-trimmed hat in spite of the warm weather, and all covered with every sort of rug and blanket and coat that Isadora had collected for years, was a sight to behold. The weather was gorgeous, and the scenery magnificent. We arrived at Leipzig without any mishaps or scandals at one A.M. but when the awakened night clerk of the smart hotel saw this straggling band enter, he hesitated whether to give us rooms or not. I couldn't help laughing myself. First came Sergei with his immense fur-lined, fur-trimmed coat, and looking for all the world like a bear with his wild look, and top boots, swinging a camera and a pair of field glasses that he always insisted upon having with him, as he had once seen an Englishman wear them—then the professor swinging his balalaika, who, as the night had been cold, had put on an immense Russian, fur-lined, voluminous red velvet coat of Isadora's that reached the ground, and beneath his little

skull cap, his long, skimpy hair floated in the wind. The poet also had adopted one of Isadora's immense Russian coats, a bit worn and shabby, but very much of it.

And to make the whole thing more picturesque, a basketful of newspaper clippings that Isadora hadn't yet had time to look at since her arrival from America, but which she dragged along everywhere. This basket had opened and thousands of clippings formed a carpet and trail straight from Berlin to Leipzig. Bits of these clippings stuck to our hats, our shoes and our clothes, generally making themselves seen by every one. We left traces of them all the way to Paris. The rooms they finally gave us were not by any means their best.

We were up early the next morning and had I not taken the precaution to relieve Sergei of the rest of our thousand francs, we might still be sitting there. Just as we were leaving the hotel, Sergei missed this roll of bills. He declared he had been robbed of a large sum of money which friends of his had given him to give to their families in Russia when he arrived.

However, we were soon on our way again and arrived late at night in lovely, gentle, old-world Weimar. Isadora and I were filled with emotion which she tried to impart to the Russians, but only the old professor seemed to understand, and the next day after another horrible night of scandal and trouble, mostly about the loss of Sergei's money, which by this time had grown, so he said, into thousands of dollars, we visited Goethe's and Liszt's houses. I sat quietly in the garden and prayed the spirit of Liszt, if he could hear me, to save Isadora,—Isadora, who so adored his music.

I must admit that Sergei was at his best that day. All

this appealed to him and I am sure very interesting talks among the Russians took place, while Isadora sat back smiling like an angel, content that her darling spoiled child Sergei was happy. Such love as she had for this boy of twenty-seven was beyond understanding.

We were almost at Strasbourg when the chauffeur notified us he could not quite go to the border line as the French would confiscate his car. We could not get out and walk eight or ten miles as it was eight o'clock at night, and we had also forgotten all about the visés. So he took us back a few miles to the nearest town where there was an American and a French consul.

My! what arguing Isadora and I had to do to get them across the border! Nothing however could I do for the old professor, so we kissed him a fond farewell, but unfortunately Sergei in one of his mad moments the night before had broken his darling balalaika, so I don't think he minded going back much. In fact, I think the dear soul, much as he loved Sergei and his wonderful poems, would have died of grief at the scenes he witnessed, had he stayed much longer. The consul knew Isadora, Sergei and the other poet were left outside in the car. We explained to the consul that Isadora was taking her husband to France to see a specialist, that he had epileptic fits, and that we could not take him alone, so we had another young Russian nurse for him. And so we got our visés.

Isadora refused absolutely to pay the chauffeur; in fact, she couldn't, for we had no more money, unless he took us to Strasbourg, as he had agreed. But he took us to the police, instead, where they said he was right. The French would certainly take his car, as the other way about, they would take a French car, if it came within catching dis-

tance. On the other hand, he had no right to deceive us by saying he would take us to Strasburg; they would find us a car that had made arrangements to go across the frontier, and we could go in that. They would take care of our baggage until we sent his money, when they would send our baggage on to us in Strasbourg.

The next day we got our luggage through the hotel porter. It's wonderful what hotel porters can do. After several years of portering, they should become diplomats. Now we had no money at all, not a cent, still we hired an auto to take us to Paris.

The only car we could get that would give us credit was a closed one. It was pouring rain when we finally got started at ten o'clock at night. With the greatest difficulty we got Isadora to agree to ride in this car. She loathed them, and when we had gone but two miles, she said she felt faint and must return at once to the hotel. Under no condition could she go farther in a closed car.

I explained to her that I had absolutely to be in Paris the next morning, but nothing would do. I believe she really suffered by being in a closed car. It had something to do with the death of her children who were drowned in just such a one. She began to beat the windows frantically, and in desperation we returned to the hotel.

I told her she could arrange any way she pleased about getting to Paris, but I meant to go that night on the train and if they would consent to come with me, I was sure I could get the porter to buy our tickets and I would send him the money when we got to Paris. Nothing would induce Isadora to move. She meant to go by auto, and she never changed her plans.

The porter got me a ticket and I told Isadora not to

leave the hotel in the morning before she heard from me as I would send her what money I could for her return.

On arriving in Paris I went straight to the Hotel du Rhin, and immediately got and telegraphed two thousand francs to Isadora, which she received before noon, and she at once decided it would be a pity to pass through this marvellous cathedral district without showing Sergei all its wonders and beauties. They used the two thousand francs to make a three days' pilgrimage by auto and I next heard of them four days later, when a message "For Heaven's sake come and save us" came. They were at the Westminster Hotel, and the management refused to give them food, requesting them to leave at once. They had arrived the night before, and registering as Mr. and Mrs. Yessenin, the night clerk had no idea this was the famous Isadora and her mad Russian husband who was the scandal and terror of many hotels in Europe.

I went to the hotel at once to find them in the midst of an awful argument with the chauffeur, who threatened to go to the police if he were not paid at once for his four days' trip. Isadora telephoned to her secretary, and her secretary found her two thousand francs to pay the chauffeur. (This unpaid secretary's bill, combined with the Russian doctor's bill, was the cause of the famous sale of her Neuilly studio years afterwards.)

I tried to explain to the management that Miss Duncan could not possibly move. She was expecting quite a sum of money from the money-lender, and hadn't one penny until she received it. Nothing could soften the heart of the hotel manager. He knew there would be a scandal; in fact, why there was not already one, was because he had refused to allow them to order any drinks, and Sergei had

no money to get it elsewhere. All this was horribly humiliating to the divine Isadora. She had reason to believe that marriage was an evil thing.

Finally the management accepted a piece of valuable lace and I said I would make other arrangements. I called up the Hotel Madrid in the Bois de Boulogne and reserved Miss Duncan's former suite for her. They were delighted and through fear that the hotel would communicate with them, we put all the baggage in a taxi and left at about seven o'clock. Alas for the plots of mice and men!

Isadora was very happy going to the Madrid, where she had formerly spent a fortune; she insisted, however, upon stopping on our way out at the Carlton for dinner, signing the bill, as her credit was still good there. But when we reached the Madrid, it was closed for the night. After great effort we aroused the night concierge, only to be told they hadn't a room free in the house and absolutely refused to allow our baggage to be taken down. "At least you will permit me to telephone," said I. While the other three sat outside in abject desolation, I called the Continental Hotel, asking if they had a suite free, formerly occupied by Miss Duncan. I said she was arriving in Paris and they said it was free. I then told them to lay out a cold supper, chicken and a bottle of champagne, and that she would be there within a half hour. I left them at the Continental and went back to my hotel.

At ten the next morning my son called me to the window, saying, "Surely that is Isadora and Sergei across the street who have just sat down in the Tuileries gardens." Sure enough it was and the other poet was with them. I dashed over to them, taking some cigarettes which I felt they were very much in need of. Isadora said she was just

about to place the two poets there and come looking for me. (She could always come to my hotel, but Sergei was not allowed in anywhere.) What had happened was the same as had happened at the Westminster. The night concierge knew nothing of the scandal, but the day manager told them that the rooms they were occupying were rented to a party arriving at two o'clock.

So out they came, this time leaving their baggage. Poor Isadora. What to do? I saw no use trying any more hotels. We took a taxi and all went to the money-lender. They assured us he was out, but nothing daunted we said we would wait until he returned. This seemed to cause great annoyance. They offered to have him call upon us when he came in, but we meant to stay there if we stayed all night. As other more welcome clients came in, who hadn't yet been caught, they couldn't very well say he was in after telling us he was out. After trying every means to get rid of us, he finally decided it was no use. What a rascal he was! But Isadora's situation was so desperate that we took the bull by the horns, and said that he must give Isadora the rest of the money on the spot, or he would never leave that office alive. Sergei seemed to get the spirit of this, and looked ferocious enough to kill any one. The money-lender took a loaded revolver from his desk drawer and put it on the desk. "I will shoot any one who dares lay his hands on me," he said. Seeing the revolver tickled Sergei, who always looked upon them as a childish toy. And with an unexpected movement, in one step he had the revolver in his hand, and was pointing it at the now thoroughly frightened money-lender. This evidently wasn't at all what we intended. We simply thought that by talking in his own fashion he would do the right thing and give

Isadora the money of hers he was holding up, pretending he had to wait for proof of her marriage from Russia. He finally wrote out a check, and Sergei carelessly threw the revolver from where he stood onto the desk, nearly frightening the poor man to death.

From the money-lender's we went to a picture dealer. Here was a charming man, to whom we explained the situaation, that this rascally money-lender had loaned Isadora a miserable sum, and still held her three Carrière paintings. This man having great admiration for Isadora offered to buy the paintings, and would return them to her at any time she had the money to get them without interest or loss of any kind.

Isadora was delighted with the fact that she could now get them away from the shark who had them. He returned with us to the money-lender, gave him his check and the rest of the money he had loaned—the money-lender now acting like a lamb in the presence of this gentleman, who handing Isadora the difference in currency left with the paintings. We took a taxi and started joyfully on our way, when Sergei signalled the driver to stop. We were passing a shop filled with the gaudiest silken kimonos and dressing robes of every color. He made Isadora understand that he must have some of these pretty things at once. Isadora looked at me, seeming to say, "You see what a sweet little impractical child he is," and out they got, and by the time they returned to the taxi, most of her money was gone.

We went to the Carlton for dinner, and as Isadora paid the check of a few nights before, she decided it was the only hotel in Paris worth staying in. They had always been wonderfully polite and nice to her, so she went to the desk

and came back perfectly happy, saying she had taken a beautiful suite with a lovely room for me. I declined the invitation, saying I would stay where I was.

After lunch the next day I went to see them. The hotel manager came asking if he could speak to Miss Duncan. I told him Miss Duncan wasn't feeling well but I could speak to him; would he tell me what it was he wanted? He said that that evening there was to be a great gala, and the management would consider it a great honor if Miss Duncan and her party would come down to dinner. I said, "I am afraid not, Miss Duncan always dines in her room."

"Oh yes," he said, "I remember, but we have told the press that we have many distinguished people coming tonight, and we wish especially to invite Miss Duncan." This was too much for me. I went into the salon and found Isadora pale, but when I gave her the message she, reclining gracefully on the couch, said she would see the manager. He was most polite and effusive, and finally induced her to accept.

She said sweetly, "Remember, I am only breaking my rule for you." You can imagine how we laughed at this reception,—from being thrown bodily out of a hotel to being coaxed by the management to dine at its expense was turning the tables a bit. But, oh, what a night! What a night! Isadora had invited several artists to join our party; it was a brilliant affair. Just as we were finishing dinner, and things looked as if we might get out safe and sound for once, the professional dancer came to our table, and begged Isadora to dance a tango with him. My heart almost stopped beating, knowing Sergei's unreasoning jealousy. And even if he were not jealous, Isadora's dancing

of the tango was enough to make a saint jealous. Personally, in spite of her remarkable beauty and grace, I always wanted to run away when she danced this.

As she came back triumphantly to the table, Sergei cried rather loudly, "More champagne." Every one applauded Isadora wildly, and she and the professional danced again, this time every one leaving them the floor. And the waiter, although Isadora and I had told him not to do so, had brought more champagne.

As Sergei was beginning to look a bit wild, Isadora asked me to follow her upstairs, and the others could come for coffee whenever they pleased, and she hoped Sergei would follow but he didn't. Before leaving the dining room she called the head waiter to the door and told him not to give her husband anything more to drink as he was a very nervous person and if they found him acting the slightest bit queer, to lead him gently upstairs.

About half an hour afterwards, there occurred an awful racket as several of the porters tried to lead Sergei gently upstairs. He struck open the door, yelling, "Champagne, champagne." Isadora said, "Give him all the champagne he wants; perhaps that will quiet him." Then began an awful scandal. He insulted her about dancing the tango and she, never taking insults quietly, added a few of her own, all this in their familiar Chinese-Russian jargon—the very picturesque language that they had created to understand and speak to each other. Then he took his coat and hat and went off, after getting some money from the concierge. Isadora said, "To avoid a scandal, I will sleep in the room across the hall," and insisted that I stay with her. Truly I could not leave her under those circumstances.

Then again a sound like the siege of Paris took place.

No regiment could ever make more noise than this one mad Russian poet when he was at his best. He came home looking for more money, and in the meantime Isadora told the concierge he should not give him any. This brought the wrath of demons on the poor fellow's head. After Sergei had broken everything that came in his way in his own room, torn all Isadora's clothes from the wardrobe and strewn them all over the place, he then tried to break the door of our room.

Isadora now telephoned downstairs, saying they had better send up a couple of strong men, for some one was trying to break in our door. They replied they had no such porters, but if the young man did not come down at once, or go to bed, they would find a means to quiet him. Isadora explained this to Sergei through the door. He gave one vicious kick and then went downstairs, furious.

Isadora, wild with excitement and fearing some one would hurt him, blamed it all on the hotelkeeper for letting him out. She dressed, saying she would go out to find him, that she would go mad if she stayed in. I had never seen her in such a mood. She seemed to be searching utter destruction, solely because he had insulted her.

By this time it was three o'clock in the morning, yet out we went. As nearly every place was closed, we went to the Halle (the marketplace) where all the revellers go in the early morning for breakfast. Isadora ordered the most expensive Napoleon brandy which she passed around like water to the dancing girls sitting about in the Père Tranquil, the famous early breakfast place. The market was one blaze of golden flowers, fruits and vegetables as we returned, but Isadora saw nothing of this; she came home in a comatose condition. We found Sergei asleep on a

pillow in a corner behind the sofa in the salon. It seems he went into a Russian night restaurant without money, insulting his hosts, but these present Russian restaurateurs, having formerly been generals in the Czar's army, knew how to treat this Russian peasant. They took his watch and coat and after taking off his shoes, beat him on the soles of his feet. Then they threw him out into the gutter. The taxi which had brought him to the restaurant, picked him up and brought him home.

Isadora went to bed more dead than alive, and the next morning the manager was up bright and early, saying we must leave immediately. I told him it was impossible, that Miss Duncan was very ill. He said that didn't matter, they would carry her out the back way where they had a special entrance for sick people and the dead. Isadora was so ill that I was afraid she was dying. She lay with glazed eyes, not seeing or understanding anything.

Sergei was all tenderness and greatly worried about her, besides being greatly frightened that the police would come and lock him up. As I didn't go mad with all this, I believe I am safe forever. The management finally refused to talk about the thing, simply insisting that we leave.

I sent for Raymond, begging him to come at once with a good doctor, which he did. The doctor gave a certificate stating that it was absolutely dangerous for Miss Duncan to be moved at all, and that she had been poisoned; and he warned them to be very careful. This poisoning rather frightened them as she had dined in the hotel and then declared rather loudly the night before that she had been poisoned.

They didn't bother us any more and the next day we all went to the Reservoir Hotel at Versailles. It was a delight-

ful little pavilion. They stayed here several days, afterwards returning to Paris, as Isadora was able to get possession of her own house at 103 Rue de la Pompe, with its magnificent Salle Beethoven, where before so many blissful happy hours had been passed with the music of the archangel and the dances of Isadora and her four lovely pupils. In this salle the beauty and wit of Paris had often gathered.

As there was no money, there began the daily sale of furniture, books, pictures, mirrors, anything and everything. Each day Isadora would smilingly say, "Well, what shall we eat to-day—the sofa, the bookcase, or perhaps that old chair?" So each day the second-hand furniture dealer came, leaving the price of dinner. It really got to be a sort of game, wondering what one would get. One of the things that amused Isadora the most was a set of tapestry, sofa and four chairs, a present of years before from Lohengrin. She had spent large sums keeping these in storage and being well cared for while she was away but when they came to be sold she could only get three hundred dollars for them, as they were but clever imitations. Strangely enough, she hated them but had always kept them because of the person who had given them. She had often said, "I can't understand any one liking these things, they give me an uncomfortable feeling," but then she hated all furniture, couches being the only thing she could tolerate, and a few beautiful tables. Writing desks she held in horror, always using an immense plain table where she could scatter books and papers to her heart's content.

Each day she found the house improved, as the furniture gradually left, until there was nothing more to sell. Then things got very bad indeed. Sergei had continued his wild

scenes every three or four days until Isadora no longer dared stay in the house alone with him, and either Raymond or myself, or sometimes both of us, spent the night there. Often Raymond, Isadora and I would each sleep on a couch in the great studio. There were dozens of these couches piled with pillows, while Sergei roamed around all night, making scandals in different parts of the house. One night he made a spring and dashed head first through the window, smashing the glass as he passed through, but not even scratching himself.

Another night Sergei, Isadora and I dined with the Princess Galitzin (Amy Gouraud) and after dinner Isadora danced, while Amy sang some weird Hawaiian song, accompanying herself on a native instrument. These songs she had learned from the old king when she had visited Hawaii years before. It was all very strange and wistful, but Sergei as customary began one of his famous scenes and we left hurriedly. Without waiting for a car, we walked home—Sergei singing at the top of his voice and reciting poems as they do in Russia, but much to the astonishment of the Parisians, who were trying to sleep.

I begged Isadora to come home with me and leave him alone. I told her this was the only way to avoid scandal and danger. I really had had quite enough, and did not intend to spend another night in that house. Isadora spoke to the policeman on the beat, asking him if he would stay within call as her husband was very ill and was sometimes dangerous. I refused absolutely to enter the house, leaving Isadora, she accusing me of cowardice and being a quitter. I went home and was awakened in the middle of the night by Isadora's coming in and saying she could stand no more

—that we must find some way to rent or sell the house, as she intended to send Sergei to Russia at once.

The next day by great chance we found a Russian who was terribly touched by Isadora's condition and who offered to rent the house, paying her a very good sum down, and promising a yearly rental afterwards. We never let him out of our sight, and before the day was over had arranged everything. He had gone to his bank, got the money, and I insisted he go with us to the American Express Office and give Isadora two-thirds of the money in American Express checks, which Sergei thought were just receipts, and the only money he knew Isadora had was the 25,000 francs she took in cash. The instant we got back to the house, he ran to his tailor, getting two suits he had ordered the week before and which had to be paid for immediately. This, he had done in spite of having dozens of new suits, in fact, he had trunks and trunks full. Isadora again remarked that he was childishly playful in wanting things.

Later in the day she was greatly upset by the police coming to inquire about him, due to her conversation with the policeman the night before. They again gave him twenty-four hours to get out of France, so by seven that night he had finished packing his things and was off to Berlin, to await Isadora there. She promised to follow him in three days. As we were about to get into the car to take him to the station, Isadora noticed among his baggage a small trunk that contained all her private letters and papers.

Isadora had the chauffeur throw this little trunk out of the car without Sergei's knowing it. He had secretly brought it down himself and put it in the car. We finally

got him off and as we turned away, Isadora said, "Thank God, that's over," and for once she slept soundly.

The next day we went to Raymond's studio to lunch. Suddenly Isadora said, "My nerves must be in an awful state. I still imagine I hear Sergei's voice." But, alas, it was not imagination! It was Sergei himself, who on arriving at the Belgium frontier found that he hadn't a visé; at least he said so, but truthfully, he missed the little trunk with Isadora's private papers and returned immediately. Throwing himself on his knees before Isadora he said he could not live without his adorable wife and would go to Russia or wherever she went. He would never be separated from her again.

This pleased Isadora so much that the next day she left with him for Berlin, I promising to follow three days later. Raymond and I realized another four thousand francs on a few of the things that remained and when I arrived in Berlin, they had spent almost all the money they had except the American Express checks, which Sergei thought were no good.

I tied the extra four thousand francs in a little bag and made Isadora promise not to let him see it and she told me afterwards that these few francs saved her life when he had left her alone in Russia, after she had spent the American Express checks upon her school. The night after I arrived, they left for Russia. I had promised Isadora I would accompany her and help her recreate her school, but Sergei had arranged with our old friend, the Soviet Minister, not to give me a visé, so I could not go.

As the train pulled out, they stood with their pale faces like two little lost souls. Isadora waved good-bye, tears

streaming down her face. "Mary, dear, promise me you will come. I will arrange your visé in Moscow and I know if you promise, you will do so. If you don't come, you will never see Isadora again." I returned to Paris, and a week later entered a hospital, a complete wreck.

CHAPTER XV

ISADORA AND YESSENIN ARRIVE IN MOSCOW (1924)

ISADORA and Sergei arrived in Moscow to find the school in a deplorable condition. Fortunately Isadora had the American Express checks for about 70,000 francs. Things had changed considerably in Russia and everything was now on a commercial basis. You could buy what you wanted, provided the article needed was on hand and you would pay the exorbitant price. Merchants were not allowed to sell anything, only the government stores could do so, and they charged what they liked. Food alone was cheap and plentiful—also wines and alcohol.

Isadora spent everything she had on the school. This infuriated Sergei, who wanted all she possessed to give to his friends. His dozens of suits he scattered wildly, also shoes, shirts, etc.,—to say nothing of Isadora's clothes which she had constantly missed in Paris and blamed their loss on the servants.

She and Sergei had been back only a few days, when he disappeared for several weeks. Isadora was distracted, believing some harm had come to him. Rumors kept coming to her ears about his being seen at night in restaurants, usually with a woman. This kept up for months; he only returning to cajole her out of money with which to go off again on a grand debauch.

What a sad, thankless business it is for a sensitive woman to try to save a mad drunkard, but Isadora never felt the slightest anger against him. When he returned, he only

had to come in, throw himself at her feet and, like the Madonna, she pressed his curly, golden head to her bosom and soothed him. At this time she was quite ill herself—very nearly had pneumonia—still all the time she kept struggling to feed the pupils and keep them warm, besides feeding them daily with the spirit of the dance. All Isadora wanted was to give happiness.

When alone Isadora would sit for hours with an immense album of her children's pictures. This was never out of her possession and very rarely shown to any one. One evening when Sergei came home unexpectedly, he found Isadora seated weeping over this book of her dear lost ones. In a paroxysm of rage he snatched the album from her and before she could stop him, threw it in the roaring fire. Isadora would have torn it from the flames but he held her with his mad, superhuman force, taunting her about her children. She finally dropped unconscious, and this was the last time she ever saw him.

Thoroughly worn out and ill with the struggle to keep the school, and worried about Sergei, and as the weather was very hot, she finally decided to go to the country. She had had no communication from Sergei for months, when one day there came a telegram, saying, "Please stop writing or telegraphing Sergei Yessenin. He now belongs to me and wants to hear no more from you—[signed] Tolstoi."

So this was the end of all her dreams—her unselfish ambition for her young poet. Alas, truly there was some curse hovering over her love life. It always ended in catastrophe.

In the country Isadora tried again to carry on her school and devote her life to this alone. She had made

some wonderful friends among the Communists. She always said: "If more could be known of these great men who gave every ounce of their vitality, brains, and souls for the great cause, Russia would be far more respected to-day. A Communist must live on the highest plane, that is, if he belongs to the party. All eyes are upon him constantly. He is like a priest to whom the masses look for guidance and example, and God help him if he should slip from grace."

Many of these men were staunch supporters of Isadora, but they could do nothing. There was no money and all the people of Russia had to be fed. However, she felt grateful for their sympathy. After many efforts to get help from the government, she finally decided to begin a tour throughout Russia. She had found, at the time, a young pianist who became her devoted slave. So, with him and an impresario, she started off to earn, as she thought, millions of rubles. But Russia had no money to spend for luxury. When Isadora realized this, she decided to dance for nothing for the masses of workers. This was a great success. Some of her letters from the Caucasus were extremely amusing. She described the country as paradise where all things grew in riotous beauty and confusion; there were flowers and fruits in great abundance. She further wrote that she, her darling (the young pianist) and her manager, had to pass the nights on a bench in the park. However, she said this was no great hardship in comparison to the hotels where you were eaten alive. The natives, for some reason, didn't seem to mind this and roared with laughter at their discomfort.

On their return, as they were leaving Pskoff for Leningrad, Isadora narrowly escaped death when the automobile

in which they were travelling was overturned in a ditch. The great artist was knocked senseless and the impresario escaped with contusions. The automobile was completely wrecked.

At last they arrived in Moscow only to find that that department of the government which had charge of such things had cut off the electric light and gas for nonpayment of bills. This was too much for Isadora. Because of such things she had come to this country. So, in desperation, she accepted the proposal of a wily impresario who offered to take her for a tour throughout Germany.

One fine fall day she kissed all the little pupils good-bye, promising to send them all the money she made, begging them to be faithful, leaving them in the care of Irma, her older pupil. She would soon return with much money and then, no more worries—only happiness and their dancing. Entering an airplane, Isadora flew over Moscow and into Germany.

CHAPTER XVI

ISADORA BACK IN BERLIN (1924)

AFTER this extremely dangerous trip Isadora arrived in Berlin, Germany, where she had had some of the greatest successes of her life, where she had been hailed as the holy Isadora, and truly, when she danced some of her more serious dances, there was no other word that could so express the feeling she gave.

Well, here she was, far more advanced, far more spiritual in her art, ready to bring inspiration of the Resurrection and Life. She was very thin at this time from all the suffering and anxiety she had gone through, but the German critics could find nothing better to say other than that she was fat and old, and her performance was a decided failure, for the first and only time in her life, in spite of the fact that many of her old followers were there and applauded as madly as ever.

Isadora, whose beautiful body had been at one and the same time the means of transmitting her great art, and her art's greatest curse—her lovely human body irritated and maddened by all the restriction put upon it by art—taking its everlasting revenge in crying incessantly for its human rights, for its joy and satisfaction.

Had it not been for her sense-loving body dedicating itself to the worshipful service of Venus as well as art, Isadora's life would have been very different. Had it been her fate to continue along the esthetic flower-strewn

path, in which her art was first born, she would to-day be enshrined as one of the gods of the world. People all over the universe would have bowed down and worshipped her. Millions of dollars would have been realized for her school from all quarters of the globe. Parents and governments would have considered it the highest honor to give their children and orphans to Isadora's school. It was on this basis that Isadora and her dance were first recognized in Europe. She was known as the holy Isadora and deservedly too, but alas, all art has to deal with some earthly medium of transmission, and poor Isadora's happened to be her body. Even then, had she been a hypocrite or kept her private life a bit more secretive, all would have been well, but she felt life was an important matter, and its whole meaning should be shown honestly and openly.

In other arts like painting and sculpture, we accept the art with great joy, and leave the artists alone to do whatever they please and live their private human life as they choose. The human phase of her life had always been the great obstacle to any firm foundation for Isadora's school. She wished to teach the children (which had to be done at a very early age before their bodies and minds became spoiled by conventional training) all the principle and foundations of her marvellous theory of the dance, and as she gave all this freely and generously, even to feeding, clothing, and caring for them in every way as the fondest mother might, she then expected that they in return would do the same for other children, who in turn, would continue her teachings, until all the little children in the world one day would have sound beautiful

bodies, capable of only the most beautiful movements, their minds filled with this sacred study of beauty.

Isadora never for one moment meant her pupils to be a theatrical event, but on the contrary, that, in large groups they would take part in great festivals, something of importance to the people the world over, or for great musical events, of which they, like the orchestra, would be an integral part.

That she would spend her life and fortune teaching a few children to become stage dancers where they might earn a scanty living, is too absurd even to think of. The time she spent teaching them she could have earned enough to support such a group forever. But Isadora forgot she was dealing with human beings with wills and personalities of their own, and who, although they loved her devotedly, felt they had a right to their own lives, to live them as they saw fit. As they so often justly said to me, "We never asked to be taught this, and at the age of four or five, we certainly could not give our consent. So, what? It has pleased Isadora to teach us, and more, we feel we have the right to use our talents and education for our own good in our own way."

After all, who could blame them? Isadora's idea was only possible as a beautiful religion, whose devotees would give their lives to the world. Isadora never taught them fear. They knew nothing of punishment—only to be happy.

But the case of Isadora's school is not unique. Almost every father and mother of a family have the same problem. Youth demands much, and has little gratitude. Isadora's idea was one of Utopia.

After all Isadora had endured, her reception in Berlin

was heartbreaking. She who had been so enthusiastically welcomed before was now treated as an enemy. This is all the more astonishing as Isadora during the war had divided the receipts of her benefit concerts between the French and the Germans. It was her belief that artists were above boundary lines, and the wounded to her were just suffering men who needed anything she could give them. She hated the German war lords and their policy, but loved the German people.

The day after this performance her Russian manager absconded with the entire receipts, leaving Isadora utterly destitute. Before her performance, with the money furnished by this manager, she had taken a room at the Central Hotel and always wishing to share any luxury or beauty she might have, she invited Elizabeth to spend a few days with her. A lovely, spacious room with a bath was procured and they had delicious champagne with their dinner. Isadora was delighted with the thought that she could give Elizabeth any happiness, for she loved her dearly, as she did all her family.

As a result of her trying Russian experience, Isadora had learned to drink more freely. She loved the stimulation that alcohol gave her. It cheered and warmed her entire personality. She loved the sociability and relaxation a bottle of wine gave to a gathering. The idea of serving cold water with a dinner seemed to her uncivilized, and I'm sure the greater part of the world agreed with her.

Alcohol affected Isadora differently than it did most people. She expanded like a flower showering love on the whole world. If she were happy, then there was no reason why the entire world should not be—and all that she had,

she shared, even with the lowliest of her friends or acquaintances, who happened to come in. They were always invited to share the most expensive food and wines. She would never have anything but the best, and being a connoisseur, she knew the best. Nothing was too good to give away; in fact, only the best was good enough to give her friends.

Elizabeth returned to her school, the Elizabeth Duncan School, the most highly respected school in Germany, and although her ideas were exactly the same as Isadora's in regard to marriage and the right of women to have children, she preferred to live her own life as it suited her.

After a few weeks, poor dear Isadora, hopeless and without a penny, was obliged to leave the hotel. She took her bags and started for Potsdam, where Elizabeth's school was located, for in such a plight it was only natural that Isadora would turn to a member of her family. Mr. Merz, Elizabeth's close friend and superintendent of the school, and who, many years before, had been Isadora's secretary, when the school had been hers, met her at the door saying, "Elizabeth has gone to Salzburg." He talked on, saying it was impossible for them to have Isadora in the school. When she replied she had no place to go, not a penny for food, he roared that it was her own fault and she could not stay there.

A young American musician who was studying in Berlin had accompanied her, and hearing all this, turned to Isadora, saying, "Isadora, I have a small allowance every month, and if you will do me the honour to share it, you will make me most happy."

So, for months, she lived the life of a poor artist, and then, one day I received a cable from Isadora telling me

her awful situation. Whereupon Augustin notified his bank to send her a very generous sum every month, which continued so long as he had a penny remaining.

Finally the backers of the young musician, hearing he was leading a wild, debauched life, stopped his allowance. How often beautiful things are taken for vice. I remember once when Isadora, Lohengrin, and I were in the country, reading philosophy, and listening to the most heavenly music, Isadora turned to me and said, "Mary, I'll wager if you pick up any paper, you will read of the vile debauched life we are living,—Lohengrin in the snares of a vicious dancer."

At last the time came for Isadora to bid a sad good-bye to Germany. She had received some money from America, so, weary and heartbroken, she took the train for Paris.

CHAPTER XVII

ISADORA BACK IN PARIS AND YESSENIN'S DEATH (1925)

AS Isadora's house was still rented she was obliged to go to a hotel. She went to the Letitia on the Boulevard Raispail, where at least she would be in touch with the artists. The bourgeoisie had now become a horror to her.

Many friends soon gathered around, some helpful and others who were just glad of a meal and a cocktail. Before very long her bills had run up to enormous proportions. The money sent her from America usually afforded one great feast for Isadora and her friends. After that the deluge, and things would be desperate again. As she could not collect a penny of rent on her home at 103 Rue de la Pompe, she asked Yorska, an old friend of hers, if she would advance her three months' rent and Yorska could collect it when due from the tenant. Yorska most generously did this, giving Isadora four or five thousand francs. This helped for a time.

On December 28th, 1925, Isadora received the news of the tragic death of poor Sergei. After a horrible year of debauchery, during which time he had spent most of his days in the lowest bars, dressed almost in rags, his health failed him completely. He was put in a sanatorium and after some months had been released, but as he could get money from no one and loathed and hated his lowly condition, he decided that death was the only thing.

Sergei was considered one of the finest Russian poets and

could have had a very great career indeed, but the terrible mixture of which he was composed, that of monklike meekness and the wildness of Pugachov, the Robin Hood of Russia two hundred years ago, made him constantly swing from gentleness to brutality. He had created nothing but trouble in his European and American tour and he said, "America was a murderer of souls and no place for a great poet."

In Moscow they laughed at him for his mania for high silk hats, patent leather shoes, and flashy dress. He believed himself to be very elegant, but the peasant was always seen and felt beneath the glamour of his fine clothes.

When Isadora and he first met, their first love trip was to Leningrad, where they stopped at the Hotel Angleterre. One morning Sergei pointed to a great hook in the corner of the room and said, "That would be a splendid place to hang oneself" and so, when broken down in health and spirit in 1925, he returned to this very room and on that very hook hanged himself, after first cutting his wrist and writing his last poem.

When Isadora heard this news, she was terribly crushed. She wrote me, "Poor little Sergei, I have cried so much over him that my eyes have no tears left."

The Russians gave him a marvellous funeral. They brought his body to Moscow and in an open casket carried him from the monument of one poet to another to honour him. Immediately after his death his books sold by the thousands, and quite a sum of money was realized. Finding that Isadora had never been divorced from him, the Russian courts awarded this money to her and the day they came to her in Paris to offer her these 300,000 francs, she hadn't the price of her hotel bill or one penny in the world, still, she

refused to touch any part of this money, saying, "You will take this to his mother and his little sisters. They need it more than I."

It was shortly after this when Isadora had gone to Nice, that she learned of the very serious illness of one of her six older pupils, little Margot. She went at once to see her but, alas, she arrived too late. This beautiful child had already passed away.

All these events had completely broken Isadora's spirit. She tried, back in Paris, after months of agonizing struggle, to raise a second mortgage on her property at Neuilly—the rent she received for this for years only paid the taxes and interest on the first mortgage, but like every other business transaction of her life, the devil seemed to have a hand in it and one morning when she went to her notaries to sign the paper, she found some debtor had a judgment against her property, and the next day it was to be sold at public auction. This was all news to Isadora. She remembered having received some ugly looking government papers but she had never read them. She had thrown them, as was her custom, without taking notice of them, into the waste paper basket.

She asked her notary what to do, and as he was very fond of Isadora, he had struggled for years to try to keep her out of trouble. He was furious that she had not sent him the papers from the government, but as the sale was the next day, there was nothing to do unless she could raise the money to pay off the claim. Even so, the law had to take its course and the house had to be sold, although she had five days in which to get it back if she had the money.

Isadora called up the newspapers, telling them her awful financial state and that now she was to be robbed of her last

remaining hope, her studio at Neuilly. Surely something could be done after a lifetime of giving her art and happiness to others. Surely there was some one who could come to her aid.

Every paper came out with columns and columns of the sad tragedy. She would not have even a roof over her. Friends came from every side. Many of the painters and sculptors of France sent some of their works to be sold for the benefit of Isadora Duncan. Every actor and actress, music hall singer and performer gave generously, and before the day was over, 60,000 francs had been collected and Isadora's property was saved.

A committee was formed and they decided that from now on Isadora would have a surety. They would collect more money and soon she would have her studio forever. They would build artist studios all around her immense garden and the rent from these would pay for the upkeep of her own school. Hurrah! Hurrah! Isadora was saved. No more worries or troubles.

A few days after this brilliant committee meeting, Isadora was terrified to find they would not use one penny of this money to pay her hotel bill or her food. In fact they declared they had no right to do so. This money had been donated to save her school and not for her to live upon.

Was there anything ever more idiotic since the world began? They were letting Isadora die of want while they talked grandiloquently of her future school. Poor distracted Isadora, not being able to make head or tail of all this, only knowing that she had signed some sort of paper about her property which was worth about 800,000 francs and now she couldn't realize a penny on it, now acted more unreasonable than ever, wanting to live in more expensive

Небо смотанной обмазано
Месяц как сырной кусок,
только немного связано
Сердце больной уголок.

Хочется петь да не этого
Что так мудрит музыку
Жду я весомо светлого
Как молодую невесту.

Лучше желания множатся
Душу волнующие мою,
Но и на гробовщиков положат
Я в весомый крутую кубок.

Июль. 16.

Сергей Есенин.

FACSIMILE OF LAST POEM BY YESSENNIN WRITTEN
IN HIS OWN BLOOD

hotels, eat the best of foods, and so on. And all these wonderful people who formed her committee believed sincerely they had saved her life.

During this trying period, many of Isadora's dearest friends whom she had formerly seen almost daily, never came near her. They couldn't endure the life she was living and loathed many of the people about her, but with great love and tenderness they kept their eyes on her from a distance and although they would have nothing to do with her wild parties, they always showed up instantly whenever some desperate need appeared. These were three of the dearest friends of her life, George Denis, the well known writer; Fernand Divoire, the French poet who wrote, "If at my death, there is one thing I will be remembered for, let it be that I loved and appreciated Isadora Duncan," and José Clara, the famous sculptor, who for twenty years never missed a dance of Isadora's and who has to-day a marvellous collection of drawings he made of her every movement. After her death, he published a beautiful book of them, which is one of the greatest monuments any artist could have.

I remember one evening when Sides, one of her committee, called, telling Isadora that if 12,000 francs were not paid to the government by the next day, she would still lose her studio in spite of all that had been paid on it. Poor Isadora replied that she hadn't twelve cents and could do absolutely nothing. She tore around in a frantic condition but along towards midnight Isadora's very devoted friend, Cecil Sartoris, came in to announce the great news that George Denis, whom she had not seen for months, had felt it a great privilege to pay this for her out of his own pocket. On hearing this Isadora wept like a child.

"Why, they still love me, my three cavaliers, but why don't they come to see me? I will soon die, then they will all come." Jumping up, she cried, "I know. Fernand Divoire has my funeral oration all ready but I just won't die to please him. Now that the house is saved, let us be joyful and happy once again."

Isadora was quite right. Fernand Divoire did read her funeral oration and nothing more beautiful could possibly have been heard.

It was their deep love for Isadora which kept them away, as it did many others, seeing her ride to destruction.

Mercedes D'Acosta, our charming little American playwright, told me she had had the pleasure when she was fifteen years old of meeting Isadora at a friend's home in Rye, New York. Isadora had danced for her and had made such an impression on Mercedes that she had never forgotten her, although she had only seen her this once.

In June, 1926, Mercedes happened to be in Paris and at the theatre one evening a friend asked her if she knew the terrible straits Isadora Duncan was in—that she was living on the left bank of the river in a little miserable hotel without friends or money and in great destitution.

Mercedes returned home but found she could not sleep. About half past one she got up and dressed, took a taxi and visited every little miserable hotel she could find on the left bank but could find no trace of Isadora. She was just about to return to her hotel, an hour later, when as she passed the Letitia, she stopped, thinking: Isadore will never be here but I will ask the doorman. To her great surprise, he said, "Yes, Madame Duncan is here."

She got the number of Isadora's room from the concierge and without being announced, went up to the second floor

and knocked lightly at the door. A gentle little voice said, "Entre," and as Mercedes opened the door, she saw Isadora sitting up in bed the very picture of misery and melancholy. Isadora exclaimed, "Why you must be an archangel—I didn't know there were female archangels," at once remembering this girl she had not seen for twelve years.

Mercedes ran to Isadora and clasped her in her arms. Then Isadora told her what an awful plight she was in, deserted by all her friends, none of whom came to see her, and how utterly destitute she was, having had nothing to eat that day. Mercedes said, "I will telephone immediately and they will bring something up." To which Isadora replied there was no need of telephoning as they had absolutely refused to bring her anything. "You see I have been here five or six months and I haven't yet paid them." Mercedes left and soon returned with a waiter, bringing a bottle of champagne and a delicious chicken. After enjoying a delightful supper Isadora felt very much cheered and said, "Now we ought to drive into the country." And as Mercedes still had her car at the door, they descended and drove out to Ste. Germain just at the break of dawn.

After a long drive through the gardens they breakfasted at La Coq-Hardi. Mercedes remembers this as one of the most happy events of her life, and on returning to the hotel, she paid Isadora's bill and the next day sought out Isadora's friends, telling them the sad position she was in.

The next month, a few days before Mercedes left for America, Isadora received a telegram from her dear friend, Ruth Mitchell, saying "Am arriving." This was joyful news, as Ruth had on more than one occasion appeared like a good angel. Isadora was happy to see her, for she loved her dearly.

Ruth finally appeared and Isadora's troubles ceased. They remained at the Letitia, but as the weather grew hot and stifling, Isadora suggested that instead of staying at this expensive hotel, for the same money, Ruth could buy a car and they could tour all over France, Isadora adding that she wanted Ruth to see all the places she knew—lovely little rustic restaurants—marvellous inns hidden away in old-fashioned gardens—and the famous William the Conqueror's restaurant at Hanfleur.

Ruth carried away by this glorious picture and by the fact that they could live cheaper, consented and at once bought a charming, grey, open car. Off they started! How different Ruth found things from what they had been pictured. The little rustic restaurants proved to be the most expensive she had ever known and as Isadora would only drink the most celebrated wines—(and she knew only too well those for which each restaurant was famous)—the bills passed all bounds. Ruth decided it must stop. She simply couldn't keep it up.

I've seen Isadora roll with laughter at this little joke in the education of Ruth. She felt she had destroyed all her bourgeoise notions and had made a real Bohemian out of her. But, to be fair, Isadora did believe her to be very rich and just a bit economical, whereas Ruth was really spending all she could spare.

Isadora then suggested they go to Nice, where she could take a studio and begin to dance and perhaps get some manager to send for her Russian pupils. This was music to Ruth's ears, and they headed for Nice. However, when they reached Juan le Pin, Isadora refused to go a step farther. So for several days they went swimming, and in order that Isadora could enjoy to the full this great happiness, Ruth

very generously had their lunches sent down to the beach. The sea acted on Isadora as an elixir. She became quite another person, so gentle, tender, and a full understanding of her art was born here by the sea and under its influence. She began seriously to want to dance.

Early one morning a few days later they drove over to Nice and out to a place called California, where they chanced to see a sign "Studio for Rent" right in front of the sea. This beach was called St. Augustin, and Isadora at once remembering the memoirs of Marie Bashkirtcheff, felt this was enchanted ground. Here in this California she would have her studio.

They entered through a narrow passage and behind the little hotel and cafe in front, they found an immense studio, in fact, a small theatre. The proprietor lived next door. He was a famous violinist and his wife a great singer, who had come here for her health but who had grown so stout she gave up all work and just sat on the balcony, looking at the sea, constantly cursing it for her increase of avoirdupois.

Ruth and Isadora were both overjoyed at finding this immense, cathedral-like studio. Isadora received some money (I don't know from where) and with the additional financial support of Ruth, they furnished the studio. How can I describe the actual beauty of this place?

The walls were hung with Isadora blue curtains, which gave immense height and dignity. A tremendous green felt carpet completely covered the floor. Eighteen couches which consisted of box springs and mattresses were so arranged that they formed an amphitheatre leading up to the stage. These were covered with lovely soft, old rose velvet, and hundreds of pillows covered with the same velvet were so

scattered that all might be comfortable. The stage proper was used as part of the seating capacity for the audience, while Isadora always danced at the other and lower end of the studio.

Soon Isadora started to give several dance recitals, at one of which Jean Cocteau, the celebrated young French author, read some of his poems. These were very successful and the élite visiting the Côte d'Azure gladly paid their hundred francs a place. On such occasions Isadora filled great vases with Easter lilies, hundreds of them, and subdued light streamed from the alabaster lamps from the ceiling and from the two great bronze stand lamps at either end of the stage. There certainly was nothing earthly about it.

As Ruth was obliged to return to America, it was planned that they go by car to Paris. Ruth, however, had not counted on Isadora inviting her two devoted friends, Walter Shaw and Marcel Erant, to accompany them, or on the fact that Isadora intended to visit all the vineyards on the trip.

Isadora always remembered this trip with the greatest joy—she, adored by Walter and Marcel, and drinking the new wine just from the press which was balm to her soul. What simple things filled her with joy!

Upon arriving in Paris, Ruth presented her with the car and, bidding her good-bye, left for America, promising her she would return shortly.

Soon afterwards, Isadora became attached to a young Russian pianist, Vida, who became a devoted and charming companion through all the ensuing months of awful want and worry. Isadora could no more live without human love than she could without food or music. They were as necessary to her as the breath of life, and without them she sank into melancholia, from which nothing could rouse her.

Being in desperate need, Isadora again appealed to Yorska, who was one of the hardest workers on the committee, and who had sent to all the newspapers a wonderful letter of appreciation of Isadora's art and her value to the world.

Yorska good naturedly proposed to Isadora that she come and live with her, promising her every luxury and a bottle of champagne for lunch and dinner. Yorska was always the soul of generosity. In this way she felt that they could work up wonderful programmes together, Isadora dancing and Yorska reciting, but there was one condition. Isadora would have to give up her penniless young Russian lover, which she refused to do.

Ruth had left some money but as Isadora found Paris rather unsympathetic, she decided to return to Nice. Besides she couldn't resist the joy of travelling the instant she had a car, but here was one all her own and there would be no expense but gasoline. So off she and Vida started!

Upon their arrival in Nice they were obliged to live at the little hotel in front of the studio, as there were no living arrangements, such as water, or gas in the studio. Unfortunately they hadn't Ruth to help them manage and the recitals they now gave were not the financial successes they expected. Isadora hoped to induce her manager to send for the Russian pupils, when she could have danced all over the Côte d'Azure.

In vain she wrote and pleaded with Irma to bring her children to her, but Irma had other plans. In fact she had taken the school to China. Isadora had tried to stop this. She had written Irma that it was the great ambition of her life to dance in China and India and that she had always reserved this as a great dream, and had begged her not to

go before she did or at least to wait until she could accompany her as the children were in absolute want—and obliged to dance to live, as they were getting no support from the Soviet Government. Irma refused and then Isadora wrote her in a fury, forbidding her to use her (Isadora's) name in any way in connection with this trip. Irma changed all her advertising to read, "Irma Duncan and Pupils." The school made a great success and, although the Bolsheviks had given the children many beautiful presents, the Russian government was obliged to send the money to pay their way back. All this thoroughly disgusted Isadora with life.[1]

One evening not long after this a young American girl, named Alice, a painter living in Paris, and an old friend of Vida's, and a very pretty and attractive one, came to visit Isadora. A Captain Patterson, an English officer with the Countess C—, who happened to be staying at the hotel next door, gave a very gay dinner which was in progress in the little café where Isadora and Vida lived, when suddenly this American girl, who couldn't stand any sort of liquor, began to feel very groggy. Isadora kept urging her to drink more. Vida, knowing the effect of wine on her, resented Isadora's insistence.

[1] As we go to press I have this moment just returned from the marvellous performance given at the Manhattan Opera House by the Isadora Duncan Dancers from Moscow. I made the contract with Mr. Hurok bringing them to America. So my promise to Isadora has been fulfilled, and her dream come true,—that the little pupils from Moscow, the last and greatest work of her life, should dance in her wonderful, her own beautiful America. She had to go to Europe to gain recognition as an artist, and to Russia to create her school, and to heaven to see it dance in America. I wonder if America will now support this tremendous task her one pupil, Irma, has carried so far and is now offering them—to gather to their hearts this legacy Isadora Duncan left them, and profit by it, to teach the highest expression of beauty and grace to this country. I hope so. If not Isadora will have been born in vain and American children lose a great heritage from a great American.

This only brought about an argument and increased Isadora's irritation. Standing up, she put her arms about Alice and said, "Vida has nothing to say about what you shall do. Here, drink with me."

Whereupon Vida ran to his room and locked the door. Isadora rushed up after him but in spite of her knockings and repeated threats to drown herself, Vida gave no sign of life.

Isadora thoroughly despondent, picked up her purple velvet mantle and wrapping its massive folds tightly about her so that she could not help herself, walked majestically into the sea. She told me she felt the waves just touching her lips and the very next step would have been her last, when Captain Patterson (who had lost one leg in the war) reached her with great difficulty.

She really meant to finish it. She was tired and weary of life. When they dragged her out, she was almost unconscious, but through all this excitement Vida, in true Russian fashion, stuck to his rôle, but helped them carry Isadora to the adjoining room.

A few days later, Vida had to go to Paris for a while, so Raymond induced Isadora to come and live with him, feeling the rigid diet of lentils, rice and water would do her good. Isadora was ready to do anything.

She moved into Raymond's studio, where every one slept on wooden benches, and each one wove or painted so much silk a day to pay for his food and each worker in turn did the cooking—much to the distress of poor Raymond's stomach. Isadora tried her best to sleep on hard boards covered with a goat skin rug, but one day when an old friend of hers, George Morevert, asked her if she wouldn't

like a bed, she acquiesced with alacrity, receiving a brass bed with springs.

After a few days, receiving an advance from her publishers, she decided she had had enough of poverty, and calling a cab, went to the studio, took her trunks and headed straight for the Negresco Hotel, one of the finest and most expensive hotels in the world. Vida on his return, joined her and she began in earnest to write her Memoirs.

Several months passed by, and as there was no more money Isadora sent Vida to Paris to see if he couldn't raise some on an old car which he had there.

Days went by, and as he didn't return or send any money, Isadora became panicky, and giving the little grey car to the hotel as security, and leaving all her trunks, she induced the porter to buy her a ticket and sleeper to Paris. This time she took a studio apartment where her credit was good and she and Vida were quite content for the time being.

It was in the midst of this trying year that I arrived from America. I had dreamed one night that Isadora's mother appeared to me, saying, "Mary, Mary, go quickly to Isadora. She needs you."

A few days after this, one of the dearest friends of my life generously offered me a trip to Europe, and, on the 23rd of April, I set sail and arrived in Paris, May 1st, 1927.

CHAPTER XVIII

I JOIN ISADORA IN PARIS (1927)

MAY day in Paris—I had arrived late the night before from America to find Isadora; I did not know whether or not she was in Paris. Paris was dull and cloudy, not at all like its smiling, sparkling self. Yet everywhere women and children were selling little bunches of lilies of the valley (the emblem of France), crying out their fragrance and the good luck they would bring.

I walked for a while just for the pure joy of being again in Paris. There is no resisting the spell, once you have known it. No city, no country in the world has its subtle, penetrating, unforgettable charm; as they say in France, it gets under the skin, and it goes into your blood like an intoxicating perfume.

I had forgotten that on the first of May no taxis or cabs of any kind are allowed to cruise and the quietness of the streets struck me as peculiar. Then I remembered and wondered how I could possibly get to the other side of Paris, as I had learned Isadora lived in the Latin Quarter. It seemed very strange to me that she should live there as I had never known her to enter a popular restaurant or cafe, the one thing she avoided. By good chance I encountered a private car, the driver of which consented to take me over the river for ten times the usual price, and at four in the afternoon I arrived. I telephoned to Isadora's suite and the saddest voice I ever heard answered. I could scarcely recognize it.

"Yes, this is Isadora Duncan."

"It's Mary," I said, and I thought I heard a sob.

"Mary, Mary, where are you—where are you—oh, my dear—God has sent you. Come to me at once."

I replied that I was downstairs; she told me to come up at once. The porter put me in the elevator, arranging the electric button so that it would stop at the second floor—he told me it was the second door on the left. The long narrow hall was badly lighted and the many doors opening on it gave a gloomy impression so utterly unlike Isadora, almost tenement-like, which was all changed the moment you entered the studio, which was just the contrary. The studio hotel consisted of five or six stories in a charming new building, each floor having five apartments, consisting of studio and bath with stairs mounting to gallery and bedroom. They were really exquisitely done in modern art decorations, furniture and hangings, though we found that this got on our nerves after a bit.

Just before I rang Number 29 Isadora opened the door, throwing her arms about me, tears streaming down her face. She held me off at arm's length and said shyly, "Oh, Mary dear, just the same, a wee bit—just a tiny bit heavier. Never mind, it's very becoming." This all in pure self-defense because to my horror I found Isadora far far heavier, and her beautiful face heavier still. In fact, a sort of puffiness that I was at a loss to understand; so unlike Isadora. But when I glanced about the room, and saw glasses, lemons, bottles untidily everywhere, my heart sank into my boots. Dainty, exquisite, lovely Isadora in this unholy atmosphere.

She seemed to feel my thoughts, although I tried to smile, and with an expression like the martyred Christ, she said, "This is the first of May, Mary dear." That was all. I

remembered then that the first of May was Patrick's birthday.

Isadora had wood brought, and a splendid fire was made in the fireplace, which brightened things up considerably. We talked of everything, and Isadora repeated constantly, "Mary, you have just come at the last moment. Another day might have been too late. For months I have been thinking of you, repeating over and over, 'If Mary were only here, she would find a way. If only Mary would come!' "

Many days later I told her of the vision I had had of her dear mother, who said "Mary dear, go to Isadora, she needs you."

While we were talking, several people came in, one a very beautiful young Italian princess, whom we called Mimi, and except for her checked cloth skirt, she was dressed exactly like a young boy; and yet was daintiness itself. They all asked for Vida, where was he, and whether he was better. Did I imagine it? Really, Isadora blushed, and looking very coyly at me, said, "Mary, there are always surprises for you." At this moment a Russian voice from somewhere above in the gallery called out, "Isadora, couchet couchet," (eat). I jumped about three feet in the air, knowing as I did that Sergei was dead; and yet here was his voice in the same words—"couchet, Isadora, couchet."

Isadora couldn't help smiling at my perturbed countenance. "Da, da, Vida, just a moment. Mary is here. Mary has come from America."

"Oh, Mary," said Sergei's voice, "wait, I will come down." And he did, wrapped in an immense dressing gown, with several silken scarves about his throat, just the antithesis of Sergei in every detail. Small, black eyes and a shock of

black curly hair, a decidedly Oriental and Semitic type of countenance, but the merriest little smile in the world. He kissed my hands effusively, saying, "Mary, Mary, we are glad to see you."

"Is this another scandal?" I asked Isadora, moving nearer the door.

"Oh, no, Mary, this is Vida, my pianist, and if he's well enough, you will have one of the great treats of your life. He is the sweetest boy in the world, and incapable of scandal of any kind." This I all found to be true later, but a most extraordinary thing, I was never able to call this young man of twenty-two anything but Sergei. But any one more unlike Sergei could hardly be found. He was gentleness itself, with none of the folly or extravagance of poor Sergei.

As other friends came, mostly artists, so things grew very lively. Then Vida played some lovely Russian marches, that really tore one's heart to bits. Isadora was preparing to go to a dinner and a meeting of her school committee. She invited me to come, but I had had enough for that day.

As she prepared to leave, a very beautiful young girl came in, who had promised Isadora to dine with Vida, as he was ill, and could not be left alone. This charming girl, I found out later, was the former friend of Vida's on whose account Isadora a few months before had walked into the sea at Nice. Vida was never invited to Isadora's committee dinners, which didn't make the committee any too popular with Isadora.

With her keen sense of justice, instead of leaving him alone, she had invited the girl to dine with him, admonishing them both to be true to her. We left. After sundown on the first of May, one can get all the taxis and cabs he likes, so I deposited Isadora at a marvellous old stone house on

the Seine, where her committee met, and went on to my hotel.

Shortly after eleven, while I was still unpacking, the telephone rang; it was Isadora's voice, saying she and Vida were downstairs, and could they come up. So up they came, Isadora went into ecstasies over my painted dresses, and I told her she might select any of them she liked. Poor Isadora, she was almost without anything of her own. I can't imagine how she could get to such a state, except that she had been obliged to leave her trunks at Nice for her hotel bills. I explained to her how a group of Russian artists, Roma Chatoff, Bobritsky and Alejeloff, had invented and developed this new method of painting on silks, and how I had hoped to support her school through this.

Among the dresses she selected was one brilliant Chinese red, which she wore on the day of her death, and which had become identified with her and very famous at Nice, Monte Carlo, Juan la Pin. "This one," I said, "Isadora, I can't give you; It's the only model I have."

Then she said, "You will loan it to me, and I will give it back to you when you need it."

I took from my trunk a package wrapped in tissue paper, and said, "Isadora, this is your really truly present, designed especially for you by one of these talented young Russians, Roma Chatoff, and every one in our studio and I myself painted a part of it. See, here is a photograph we took after they had finished painting it." So I gave our Isadora the fatal shawl that later was the cause of her death. She nearly went wild with joy.

"Oh Mary, it's like new life, and hope and happiness. I never saw anything like it. Why, it's almost living. Look how the fringe sways like a living thing. Mary, darling, this shawl shall never, never leave me! Always its soft red

folds shall warm my poor sad heart." She put it on in a hundred different ways, dancing all the time before the mirror. "This shawl is magic, dear; I feel waves of electricity from it. Come quickly, get on your hat, you must come home with us. I won't go without you. Vida will play heavenly music for us, and I will dance for you in my new shawl. What a red—the color of heart's blood." So we returned to the studio where Isadora danced and Vida played like an angel until dawn.

Another happy event in Isadora's life at this time was the successful arrival of Lindbergh in Paris. I know of nothing in years that made such a deep impression on her. She seemed carried out of herself as though she were personally concerned in it, because beneath all, Isadora was an American of Americans. She stood all night at Le Bourget and harangued the crowd at different times when they began to lose hope, saying he would arrive and then almost suffocated and torn to pieces by the terrific crowd when he finally landed, she marched all the way back to Paris triumphant. Her America had won. It had accomplished one of the greatest deeds in history. She wrote poems and eulogies of this great young American but in our facetious way we remarked that the poems were not quite up to her high standard of excellence. So I don't in the least know what became of them. Possibly, offended at our criticism, she destroyed them which is rather a pity because they were so spontaneous. In the next few days, she was brought down to the lowest depths by the loss of the two young French aviators, Nungessor and Coli, Nungessor being a very dear friend of ours. It seemed Isadora was always kept either upon the high crests or thrown into the deepest abysses.

One day shortly afterwards Isadora and I were invited

MARY DESTI

Photograph taken in 1928 by Arnold Schroder

to luncheon with the Countess C— who had just taken a very beautiful studio in the Impas Wagran. There were only eight people at the luncheon which was very gay and very brilliant, and there we met Edward Schneider, Eleanora Duse's great friend and biographer. He is one of the most brilliant, witty conversationalists I have ever met in my life. The entire studio seemed charged with his magnetic vitality and spontaneous vibrations.

Isadora liked him at once and could not hear enough of the delightful stories he told of Duse and Nietzsche. Isadora was enraptured and never for an instant let the conversation lag or get away from the things she was interested in. The rest of us sat around spellbound and none of us noticed when the table had been cleared and we passed one after another into an easy chair or divan without the slightest break in the conversation. It was six o'clock before any one thought of even moving. There had been a continuous flow of liqueurs, coffee, and fruit and as candles had been burning all day, we never realized the passing into dusk.

As several of the guests had dinner engagements and were preparing to leave, Isadora insisted that never would she break the charm of that afternoon and Schneider must come home with us to dinner, which he did, and the conversation carried on into the small hours of the morning.

One of the questions Isadora asked him was, "Why in the name of all that is holy in art did you make Duse such a staid, prim, proper person in your memoirs of her? You know that she was a great living, loving, passionate woman.

"Family, my dear," he replied, "family."

Then Isadora said, "You should never have written her life. You can't do a half truth about a great being. The

entire value is in telling the absolute truth of every side of her character, good or bad. It all goes to make the complete picture. Even her thoughts and emotions, if you could know them, should have been written quite clearly. Thank Heaven, I have neither child nor family to dictate what my Memoirs shall be and if after my death there is sufficient interest to write about me, I hope it will be the truth regardless of all sentiment."

I chimed in and said, "I will see to that."

"Oh, my God, Mary, I believe you will. Well," she continued laughingly, "you have my permission."

For hours they continued talking of Duse and at some very tender remarks, both their faces were suffused in tears in adoration of one whom they considered the greatest artist of all times.

Isadora asked him if he would consider translating into French her Memoirs which she had just written and he said he would adore doing it but he didn't know sufficient English. He, however, promised to come to Nice and see what they could do about it together.

Alas he never came and it was a very great disappointment to Isadora.

At this time all over Paris there were Sacco and Vanzetti demonstrations and Isadora tried to drag me out to them but I knew nothing of the case one way or another, so would have nothing to do with it. In a perfect rage with me, she went out and with a dozen or so other Americans gathered in front of the American Embassy, where there were great carryings on.

She had wrapped about her her red shawl, and bare headed, with her wild titian hair flying in the wind, she stood up in her car and was just about to make a speech, when

one of the gendarmes, of which there were about a thousand surrounding the embassy, stepped on the car, saying, "Isadora, go home."

This struck her as extremely funny. While she thought she was a great heroic figure leading the van forward to save the lives of these two men of whom she really understood very little but felt where there was so much sentiment for them, there must be some right on their side (and in any case, she was always for the downtrodden), the humorous side of the situation struck her forcibly. Here there were but a handful of Americans protesting outside the American Embassy and separated from it by a thousand gendarmes when one simple soul who had often seen her dance recognized that here was no place for art or an artist, and said, "Isadora, go home."

Isadora did return to the Latin quarter where at least one could express one's opinion sympathetically and where on the terrace of the Café Dome, she met a certain well known American judge who knew all the facts about Sacco and Vanzetti and where he and Isadora argued until morning to the great entertainment of an interested audience, composed of all the artists of the quarter, many of them sympathizers of the convicted men and many to the contrary.

Finally Isadora came home, bringing half a dozen stragglers to breakfast, feeling she had convinced the judge and the whole American nation of the injustice they had done these two men.

Isadora was always amused by the way Americans lived in Paris. She called it the humanizing effect of Paris on Americans and there is a great deal of truth in this. The silly snobbery that newly rich Americans feel forced to exercise continually to protect themselves against other newly

rich, they learn quickly to throw aside when they live abroad and see how simple is the code of true aristocratic people. Snobbishness does not exist in Paris. You can know anybody and everybody as long as they or you have something worth giving in the way of art, intelligence, or beauty. Who or what they are doesn't matter a bean, and they would be laughed to ridicule if they tried their cold nose supercilious methods over there. That's what makes Paris so delightful to Americans—its simplicity.

We had many delightful days at some of these receptions. Mrs. Fisher's birthday party Isadora described as paradise with a fountain of champagne in the center and truly, champagne did flow as though it came from an endless source, with the most gracious hostess in the world.

Then there were Mr. and Mrs. Lawrence Vail's Sunday afternoon cocktail parties. Mrs. Vail, the famous Peggy Guggenheim, is the guardian angel of all the poor artists in Paris and at her house one meets the greatest. Isadora loved Peggy and never wanted to leave any of her parties.

One could keep on going from party to party, always sure of a welcome and fine talk and drinks. Generally you picked up one or more people you liked at one place and took them on to the next. Often the host or hostess joined you and went along to the next house, leaving their place open for any who might come later.

Formality is the last thing expected.

CHAPTER XIX

STUDIO LIFE IN PARIS (1927)

AFTER a few days, I decided it was madness for me to remain at the Hotel Scribe. Isadora came every day to lunch and dinner, finding all the luxury there she so greatly desired, hair-dressers, manicures, etc., but unfortunately my budget could not stand it, so I looked around for a less expensive place to live.

I found a charming little furnished apartment at 20 Boulevard des Capucines, right next door to the Olympia, on the sixth floor. Mistinguette, who has the same apartment on the opposite side, has lived there for twenty years, and adores it. For some unexplainable reason, Isadora took a violent hatred to this place, and couldn't bear the thought of my spending even a night there. Often she and Vida came in at midnight to drag me out, declaring she couldn't sleep knowing I was in that gloomy place. She couldn't understand why I had not stayed at the hotel, nor did I give her my reason for moving.

The little apartment consisted of salon, bedroom, bath and kitchenette, with an immense balcony, and as it was on the sixth floor, one had a view of all Paris. I really took it for the balcony.

The landlady, who had the rest of the apartment, had a little black dog who terrified Isadora by his snapping and snarling at her. I have never seen so ugly a little brute, and he especially disliked Isadora, which feeling she cordially returned.

A few days after being installed I forgot about the apartment and turned my mind to other things. Isadora was still wearing a heavy grey fur coat, almost down to her feet, so I had made for her a beautiful tan cape which she always wore from then on, and other little things she needed. This lovely Isadora, who now had nothing, and who all her life had showered gifts on every one near her, never seemed to mind being without even the necessities in the way of wearing apparel, as long as she had a cheery lunch and dinner with a good bottle of wine.

As I said before, Isadora had been obliged to leave her baggage at the Hotel Nigresco in Nice, where she owed eight thousand francs, and had it not been for the kindness of the concierge of this hotel, who had out of his own pocket bought her a ticket and sleeper for Paris, Heaven alone knows what she might have suffered. Isadora never spoke of these things. I found this out afterwards when we went to Nice. In fact, she never spoke of the past. Her war cry was, "Never mind what's gone; think of how to get enough for to-day." If she had one hundred francs or one thousand or more, she would spend it that day and let to-morrow take care of itself. She declared the world owed her a living, and the best she could get; and then there might never be a to-morrow, so why spoil to-day for something uncertain?

I believe creating these daily difficulties were what made life possible; it kept her shattered thoughts from the one great sorrow eating at her heart night and day. Oh, wonderful glorious Isadora! Who could understand you, or what it all meant to you? How I regret every time I remonstrated with you or tormented you, trying to save you from these very worries!

The daily need for money was terrible. Her hotel bill

grew by leaps and bounds. No visitor (and there were dozens daily) ever came without being invited for tea, or a cocktail, or dinner, so long as the hotel would allow. She had three and four guests at least every day for dinner. At last the hotel decided they must put a stop to it somewhere, telling Isadora that she could occupy the studio so long as she liked but they were discontinuing the kitchen.

Then there was the terrible necessity of gathering in several hundred francs for each luncheon, as Isadora refused to dine in cheap places and would have preferred to die of starvation. She was invited out a great deal, but among her friends there were not many who could afford twenty or thirty francs a day, much less three or four hundred. But somehow or other she got it always. Some friend she had not seen for years would turn up, or the newspapers would buy some article, or some remaining thing would be sold. I went home many a night and cried till morning, with vexation that I could in no way stop this sheer slide to destruction.

All this time Isadora presumably still had her studio in Neuilly. As I have said before, this future school was truly a beautiful idea, but as Isadora repeated daily, "It's a lovely idea, but why don't they realize they are building a tomb for me? What I need is food and drink and a place to live while I am alive."

Things became so threatening that we called a meeting of the committee of those friends who had saved the studio at Neuilly, begging them to sell it and give Isadora enough money to live on each month, but committees are peculiar things, and no amount of reasoning could change their attitude. Isadora threatened to sell the studio over their heads and would have done so, only it was not in her name. In

spite of people denying it, Isadora was the poorest of the poor, doubly so, because she did not know how to cope with poverty, and yet she was fully capable of earning another fortune had she been given the slightest chance. Here she was, owner of a house worth a large sum of money on which she could have raised a mortgage which would have carried her on comfortably for a year, and yet she owed a huge hotel bill and was without any of the things she needed. The committee was composed of fine people who sincerely loved Isadora, and who believed they were arranging for the security of her future life. It reminds me of the old adage, "Live horse, and you'll get grass."

Isadora held her tired, weary head in her hand trying to understand all this finance. During the committee meeting Isadora telephoned to the waiter to bring up flocks of cocktails, and sat Vida at the piano playing beautiful music, and retired to that realm where there were no money, rules, or committees, but just harmony and love.

That evening, after the committee meeting, we were all sitting around vry blue and discouraged, I raging against the committee who seemed to me very stupid, not to see that they were not only not helping Isadora but through mistaken kindness were holding up the only means she had of raising money by a mortgage on her very own property. Suddenly there was a great ringing of the bell accompanied by a tremendous thumping at the door and when the door opened, in bounced Eva Le Gallienne and friends, loaded down with sandwiches. A waiter from a nearby Caucasian restaurant followed with great long skewers stuck through chunks of schish kebob (grilled lamb) and another with many bottles of iced champagne. What a party! What a night! Isadora screaming with laughter, said, "Mary, dear, you

NICOLLE GROUET, PICABIA AND MRS. PICABIA AT BAL LES ENFANTS, CASINO AT CANNES. SEPTEMBER (1927)

have only to sit still and concentrate, and behold the Gods answer."

"Here is my beautiful spiritual daughter." She always called Eva Le Gallienne her spiritual daughter, and when Eva learned about the committee meeting, she cursed them all roundly and said, "Don't worry, darling Isadora, I have only to relate your plight to Miss D— and she will see you through. Whatever you do, don't worry."

A few days afterwards, when things were blacker than pitch, Eva came in triumphantly waving five hundred dollars, and throwing them into Isadora's lap, said, "That's all I could get you. The damned committee got to her first and got a thousand dollars for your school." Such is life. So little would have made Isadora's last days happy.

About this time Irma was in Paris, and when Isadora heard it, she was very sad because Irma had not let her know that she was coming. Poor little Irma had just come through from Germany where she had the day before buried her mother. However, the next day Irma appeared and Isadora was delighted to get news of her school. She begged Irma to bring the children to France, so they could re-establish her school there, for alone she had not the courage to do it. I believe Irma was sincere in saying the Russian government would not let them out unless Isadora would get some one to guarantee their trip from, and their return to, Moscow, including all their expenses; she believed it might be arranged the next year but certainly not then.

Especially since the Chinese trip, Isadora always was suspicious of Irma. She felt she had come to Paris to arrange with some manager for herself and the children or to take them to America. This so worried her that she went to the

Embassy to see Madame Kameneva (Trotsky's sister). This charming, cultured person reassured Isadora saying just what Irma had said, that is, if some reliable person would put up the money, the children would be allowed to join Isadora for a tour, but only to join Isadora and no one else.

Isadora shortly afterwards went to see Lounarcharsky, her great friend, who happened to be in Paris at the time, and explained to him her fears and he gave her his solemn word that the children would never leave Russia except under her care, and that the school was and always would be hers and the children would never again be allowed to be taken out without her permission.

The night before Irma left for Russia, a young man rang Isadora's bell. On entering the room, he was terribly excited and seemed quite embarrassed. He asked to speak to Irma alone. We left them, but only a few minutes had passed when Irma called Isadora, explaining to her that the young man had asked her to send a telegram to China, giving her one thousand francs to pay for this, saying she had known Madame Borodine for years and that the day Madame Borodine was arrested as a spy on the boat, she really was in that territory to visit her child who was a pupil of the Isadora Duncan school and was dancing with them in China. As Irma was obliged to leave immediately, Isadora promised to send the telegram and to keep it a dark secret.

The next morning we were up bright and early, and drove to the Chinese Embassy, where we saw the first secretary, as the minister was not in. After hearing our story, he told us he thought the telegram would be too late to do any good, and as there were at that time several governments in China, he didn't know quite to whom to send it. However, he would give it the official stamp and write the best address

he knew, and we could send it from the telegraph station ourselves. No sooner had we done this than Isadora was seized with a terrible panic. All she could think was that perhaps she had been dragged into some awful plot. Perhaps the telegram meant something quite different and what did she know of the young man who had brought it and made this request? Why she didn't even know his name. Frantically we drove to the Russian Consul. After explaining our problem to him, he telephoned the Russian Embassy, but could find no trace of any one who had carried any such message. Again we tore madly out of the Russian Embassy, Isadora now certain some terrible plot was afoot to have Madame Borodine executed and they had used her in some way.

After hours of agony, we succeeded in finding this modest young man who had thought this telegram out all himself and had brought it, and who reassured us not to worry any more. Months afterwards when I met Madame Borodine in Moscow she told me that it was that very telegram that had saved her life. The Chinese judge, selecting it from thousands of others and reading it aloud, said, "This comes from an artist. Artists have nothing to do with politics." So it proved to him that Madame Borodine was really in China to be near her child and she was released.

About this time Isadora and I were invited to one of the grand balls of the season, given by the Marchase Cazzatti, a famous Italian beauty. She was a most remarkable, extraordinary looking person. She had newly purchased one of the most delightful chateaux in France on the road to Ste. Germain, about fifteen miles from Paris. The Ball of the Roses was to take place about eleven o'clock and we arrived around midnight in a terrible rainstorm. For miles

before one arrived at the château there were little electric signs saying "Château D'Rose" and an arrow pointing the way. As the château was not on the main road, it would have been almost impossible to find it had it not been for these indications. As we approached we thought we were viewing a scene from a very up-to-date musical comedy or something from fairyland. The house was all outlined with a row of tiny electric bulbs. The garden paths that wind in and out among thousands and thousands of roses were also lined with alternate pink and yellow electric bulbs. The entire scene was a blaze of glory veiled in this torrential downpour. Countless footmen were running about in the most attractive coats gaily embroidered in gold, satin trousers, and silk stockings. All the élite of Paris were at this gathering and I think the only English speaking people there were Isadora, Robert Winthrop Chanler, and myself.

Isadora looked glorious and all these people who had formerly been friends of hers and who had seen very little of her, if anything, since her Russian journey were delighted to see her again. Even the Grand Duke Alexander, brother-in-law of the late Czar, greeted her in the happiest way, saying, "How well I remember the last tea we had together before you left for my unhappy country."

Many of the brilliant stars from the Comédie Française were there, and all the famous poets and writers of the present day gathered around Isadora, saying, "How wonderful you are, and we heard such terrible stories we thought we were never to see you again; you, the greatest artist of all time; you, our great inspiration." They really meant it because Isadora had always been worshipped in Paris.

This ball was intended to be a sort of magic affair. Many were dressed as seers and in one of the salons a very famous

lady was telling fortunes, but nowhere could we find the hostess. It seems from the excitement and her chagrin at the rain, she had had a fainting spell and had been carried off to bed, but she shortly did appear and never have I seen so magnificent and terrifying a sight.

This very slender lady seemed to be about six feet tall and to augment this she wore on her head a very high black cap covered with glittering stars. The middle third of her face was covered with a black mask from which two great amorous eyes flashed. The rest of her costume was that of a seer, heightened by countless jewels covering her arms, neck and shoulders. The most amazing thing about this woman was her utter indifference to all her guests. She passed around her rooms like one in a dream, greeting one here and there as though she were also one of the invited. The utmost confusion reigned everywhere. Supper had been prepared for some three hundred and fifty guests and at about half past two the servants began carrying in table after table already spread and covered with every delicacy. As the hostess paid not the slightest attention to what was going on and the guests seeming utterly bewildered as to whether they should seat themselves at a table or whether they were part of the show, I don't believe more than twenty people had supper. However, a very brisk business was done at a bar that had been arranged at one end of the immense hall. Here were sandwiches of every kind and endless champagne.

Isadora, who was one of the most perfect hostesses in the world and she who had a perfect genius for making people comfortable and happy, could scarcely endure the embarrassment and lack of enjoyment among the guests and I had all I could do to keep her from turning into hostess herself

and running the whole affair, which she surely would have done had we stayed any longer. It seemed to her such a terrible waste of all this beautiful food and excellent wine that people shouldn't be merry and happy and enjoy themselves. I knew very well that if Isadora had a few glasses of champagne, nothing would stop her from thoroughly enjoying herself and from everybody else doing the same, and seeing that all these people more or less expected her to act in a wild manner befitting her recent reputation, I induced her to leave in the very midst of the festivities so that afterwards these people might say, "What false stories one hears of Isadora!"

She felt the same as I did the next day but also that she had paid a terrible price for their good opinion and had wasted a great opportunity.

As a memento of this famous event I still have a golden rose, the heart of which held a tiny vial of rose perfume. Each guest was presented with one of these on leaving.

CHAPTER XX

ISADORA'S MEMOIRS (1927)

FOR years I had tried to get Isadora to write her memoirs, even in our Bayreuth days, when we had begun to collect notes and pictures, and so, on leaving for America in 1923, Isadora gave me a paper authorizing me exclusively to sell her memoirs. I still have that paper, and treasure it.

One day while dining at Mr. Robert Winthrop Chanler's house, I happened to recount some of the adventures that had befallen us. One of the guests, Mr. T. R. Smith, said, "Mme. Desti, I wish you would write that for me. It would make a very interesting book."

"I can do better than that," I replied. "I can get Isadora to write them. Then they will really be of great value." And I made an appointment with him for the next day.

He agreed if they were anything like the story I told, he would publish them, and he further made an appointment for me with the Editor of Liberty Magazine, at that time, Mr. John Wheeler, who was interested in the serial rights, and who made me an offer of ten thousand dollars for them. I stipulated that they would have to advance sufficient money to allow Isadora to live decently while writing these, and I then cabled Isadora accordingly.

She immediately replied, demanding several thousand dollars more, but in the meantime Mr. Wheeler had been talking

it over with several other newspaper men who knew her, and they decided it would be most unwise to give her anything in advance, as they felt sure she would never confine herself to this work. However, he agreed to advance the necessary money to finish the work, if she would give him a quarter or a third of the document. I knew this was impossible, because of her financial condition, but I wrote her all the particulars, and I heard nothing about the memoirs except frenzied cables about money she needed. She also asked me to see Lohengrin, which I did, without any success. Seven or eight months later Boni and Liveright completed negotiations with her to bring out her memoirs, and had arranged a sufficient advance to take care of Isadora's expenses while she was writing. When I arrived in Paris, the money had been spent and the memoirs not yet finished.

I did everything in my power to encourage Isadora and to speed them up and get them off, and really this great book might not yet have been finished had I not happened on the scene.

But every day, no matter what our situation was or whatever there was to do, I insisted that Isadora write a part of her life until finally it was finished. Many times I have sat for hours recalling different episodes to her mind, and speaking of many things, and joking about one thing or another in our past lives to keep her at work. And I wish to state here and now that no one ever wrote a single word of Isadora Duncan's book "My Life" but Isadora herself, nor even assisted her in Paris. I myself with Juliet Barrett Rublee took the manuscript, most of it in her own handwriting, and a small part of it dictated to her secretary, to a stenographer where Mrs. Rublee paid 2,400 francs to have six copies made. Many people have hinted

THE LAST PHOTOGRAPH OF ISADORA DUNCAN, TAKEN WITH MARY DESTI ON THE BEACH AT JUAN LE PINS.
SEPTEMBER (1927)

Photograph courtesy of Arnold Schroder, New York

at a collaboration or assistance but this is utterly untrue. I repeat, Isadora wrote every word of it.

What a hopeless job it was trying to arrange Isadora's affairs! Isadora decided that she could not breathe one day longer in Paris. Her sincere friend and great admirer, the director of the Trocadero, had put a studio at her disposal in the Trocadero theatre itself. But as this is a municipal theatre, and all the rooms are constantly in use, Isadora could not use it exclusively.

She wished to put up her curtains and carpets, and arrange it in her own way, otherwise it was impossible for her to work. Her intention was to take a group of little French children and begin again her school of the dance, hoping the Government would be sympathetic to this idea and patronize it.

But as it was not possible to arrange the room in her own way, she decided to quit Paris, and as we stood looking out of the barred window of the Trocadero Studios we pretended we were in jail, and as we neither of us had the price of a taxi and Vida had failed to return and pick us up, we did not know how to get home.

At last Isadora hit on a splendid idea. She went to a telephone, called up the porter of her hotel, telling him she could no longer ride about in taxis, and didn't he know a firm from whom she could rent an auto by the month? He said he knew plenty that would rent autos, but he didn't know any willing to give credit; but when she assured him she would have plenty of money by the first of the month, he said he could get a friend of his to rent his car under those conditions. Within a very short time the car drew up to the front of the Trocadero, and Isadora instantly forgot all her worries and cares, now that she had an automobile.

We went to the hotel. She put some things in a bag, and we set out for Ste. Germain, the little pavilion of which Isadora loved better than any other place, with Isadora, Vida and I grumbling all the way, declaring that I intended to go straight back to Paris.

The director of the Hotel Henri IV was delighted to see Miss Duncan again, remembering the days when she was the most flattered and sought-after guest. During dinner I noticed a mischievous twinkle in Isadora's eyes. She seemed to be greatly amused about something, and had evidently told Vida, as he also was very much amused. I puzzled my brain as to what it could be, but knew Isadora could not keep a secret very long.

In spite of everything I said, I was induced to remain until the morning, when we all returned to Paris in our car, and after that Isadora and Vida returned to Ste. Germain every night, I refusing to go. Imagine my astonishment a week later, when by the merest chance Isadora's dear friend Ruth, who had just arrived from America, informed me that she had settled our bill at the Pavilion Henry IV. Then I understood Isadora's amusement.

As she had not paid her bill, or given up her room at the studio hotel, she thought it would sound better to say I had invited her to Ste. Germain, and had taken a suite of rooms in my name. Ruth told me later that this was all a joke to tease me, as it wasn't my bill but Isadora's which she settled.

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Isadora's only salvation, it seemed to me, was to reduce and begin dancing again. She had not danced in three years, except for several recitals she had given in her studio at Nice. First, she wouldn't hear of reducing, and was offended

every time the subject was mentioned. "Get me a large studio where I can dance, and you'll see me melt before your eyes like a candle."

Gladly would I have gotten a studio for her but studios are as scarce as sparrows' teeth in Paris. Still, we looked religiously for one. Then Mme. Cecile Sartoris, Isadora's manager, and I talked it over. I agreed if Cecile would arrange a concert worthy of Isadora in every way, I would never leave her a second and would guarantee she would be in a condition to dance. I always had a very strange influence in regard to her dancing. I suppose it was because I believed so in her great art. To me as an artist she was superhuman, nothing in the world had ever been so wonderful; and when it came to a question of dancing, I could always get her away from any of her personal affairs, and in spite of the fact that several times in her life she declared that her dancing days were done, that she would never dance again. I could always lift her out of this, and by my sincere faith in all that she could do, no matter what any one said, I knew, and she knew, that she could still dance as well as ever, and really could have continued for many, many years.

I talked dancing, and art, and getting thin, until she would have liked to throw me through the window, but she always finished by doing what I wanted. So every day through rain or shine we trotted off to Orcier's Baths. Dear old Orcier! He had brought Isadora back to condition more than once. He was delighted. Once more he would be able to show Paris what he could do.

After the bath we lunched on one lamb chop and a slice of pineapple, but she would never give up her one cocktail. She said she couldn't swallow until she had one. But she

was wonderful, she would have lived on biscuits if necessary. I have never known the tenacity of purpose with which she did things, once she started. She knew she could dance to-day as well as she ever had, and she meant to; but she nearly drove poor Mme. Sartoris mad.

If she saw a billboard without her name she declared they were not doing sufficient advertising, and meant to have her dance in an empty house. Which she would do if necessary, if only to convince us of our great mistake in making her dance; that unless Mme. Sartoris found her three hundred francs a day, she could not get the sort of food necessary for her, and so it went on until poor Cecile Sartoris reduced faster than Isadora through anxiety, all of which amused Isadora immensely.

She loved having every one in a state bordering on lunacy —perhaps this is the way great artists get every one sending out energy in every direction. I remember at Bayreuth all the artists declaring Frau Wagner wished to kill them, she kept them in such a state of anxiety and excitement during the rehearsals up to the first day of the great performances, then they went off like sky rockets.

Finally the day of the matinée performance arrived. Isadora and I went to the theatre alone, and as she no longer had a maid, she spent the entire morning getting together all the little necessary things, such as safety pins, elastic, etc., which she needed at each performance, all of which, upon our arrival at the theatre, in the most violent rainstorm, she found she had left at home.

We only discovered the loss of these things a few minutes before the curtain went up. I sent one of the stage hands scurrying for them, when Isadora discovered she had forgotten her little tights, just a few inches long, but abso-

lutely necessary. Then she exclaimed, "I cannot possibly dance without them;—I can, but sometimes the audience are so bourgeois instead of only feeling the spirit of my art, they are looking to see if I am properly covered. Don't you remember the police in the Boston theatre?"

While wondering what to do about the tights, the call came to the door and Isadora was delighted. She would dance without them; in fact she would have just as soon have danced naked. She never seemed to think it mattered in the least what she had on. The purity of her art so possessed her that nothing in her eyes could have changed it; and sure enough no one even knew of the omission.

A most extraordinary unhappy event almost ruined the day. Her dressing room, the hall outside, back stage, and every place where one could put anything were filled with flowers. There was scarcely room to move. This delighted her, although she kept saying, "It would be much kinder if they sent me champagne while I am alive; they can send the flowers when I am dead, which will be soon, if they don't find a place for me to dance."

The night before as we were madly trying to find a hall large enough to practise in, a friend telephoned, saying the Majestic Hotel management had been kind enough to put their ballroom at Miss Duncan's disposal for the evening. We arrived at the Majestic only to find that there was no carpet and it was too late to fetch hers from the theatre, and she could not possibly practise on a bare floor.

Greatly dejected, we stood in the lobby of the hotel, talking to the manager, when suddenly Isadora saw her Archangel whom she had not seen in years, getting his key from the bureau; but she did not see his wife and mother-in-law who stood just behind us, waiting for him. As he came

towards them and us, Isadora went to meet him, putting out her hand, which he took and kissed, but in the most embarrassed manner.

Isadora said, "Don't you think it's quite time, after all that has passed, that we became friends?"

He replied, "Oh, yes, yes, of course we are friends."

She said, "I am dancing to-morrow, and would so like to have you come and would gladly send you tickets." He stammered something unintelligible about going away the next day, bowed, and joined his family, who looked anything but pleasant as they went to the elevator.

Isadora, gentle as a lamb, was touched at seeing one whom she really always loved; in fact, once Isadora loved, it was forever. She never changed, no matter how circumstances did.

The day of the matinée, just before she descended to the stage to dance, they brought to her dressing room a gorgeous bunch of white lilies; the card read, "With fondest love, Archangel."

I was standing behind her and saw the look of almost divine love and pardon that streamed from her Madonna-like face, already filled with the harmony of the music she was about to dance. Isadora never went on the stage before first concentrating and getting what she called her motor functioning. She believed that all movement came from somewhere near the heart, and she would stand perfectly still till this feeling spread all through her being, and only then could she dance.

"How beautiful he is, Mary, after all." And I, like a sentimental fool, felt tears trickling down my cheeks. I had always thought him a beautiful spirit, and had never blamed him or any one for what had happened when he fell

in love with one of Isadora's pupils. Isadora had always preached freedom, but couldn't quite live up to it when the great crisis came.

She went on the stage for the first half of her performance filled with the happiness of believing that her Archangel, the great artist, was somewhere in the audience, and all was lovely and harmonious. I quickly ran around to the front of the house. It was packed by one of the finest audiences that ever came together. Every artist of note in Paris was there; every admirer of her art. They were breathless to see her again, the divine Isadora, the marvellous Isadora. Some even came to criticize. Then slowly the back curtain parted, and Isadora, like a long weird note of music, like the very soul and spirit of all harmony, came forward. All during her dance you could have heard a pin drop. Never had there been such a success, never such ecstasy, not even in the greatest days of her youth had she ever moved people so. There was something mystic and holy about it. When she danced the Ave Maria, not a dry eye was in that audience; just one suppressed sob seemed to hold them all, critics, dancers, artists, musicians, stage-hands, all went mad with enthusiasm. No sooner had she finished than the entire house rose and clapped and cried.

Oh, God, how beautiful to have given her this one last triumph, the glorious adieu to Paris, to the stage, to the dance! I rushed back immediately and found her bathed in tears of joy. Albert Wolfe, her musical conductor, was kissing her hand, tears running down his face.

Very quickly she had to change her draperies. She always had in her dressing room when she danced a bottle of champagne and a small flask of brandy, for her heart was very bad, and she drank a glass just before going on the stage.

During the middle of the second part when the curtains were down for a few seconds, I did not go back, and then the tragedy happened.

In some way, I still don't know how, she had found out that the lilies were not from the Archangel, but from her beautiful friend Mercedes, whom she, you will recall, called the female Archangel, who had returned from America for Isadora's performance. I noticed from the front that there was something wrong, as I saw her fall in the death scene of Isolde. Fortunately the audience noticed nothing, but I noticed that she could scarcely get up again. I rushed back, as this was the end, and found her so weak she could hardly go back to take the encores, of which there were dozens.

A strange thing about Isadora, she never wanted any one to know when she was hurt, so piteously holding the bunch of lilies against her heart, she said, "Mary, dear, I couldn't bear to spoil your illusions about the Archangel; it seemed to make you so happy to think he'd remember. But these were not from Walter, but from the sweetest of all Archangels, Mercedes." Darling Isadora! Was ever any one so brave?

By this time the stage was crowded, and I could scarcely make way. They all wanted to embrace her and to show her how wonderful she was, but she was very far away, and could hardly understand it all.

I got her to her dressing room, and later when we could get through the crowds that stood at the stage entrance (not paying the slightest attention to the pouring rain), we went to the car and home. The entire corridor of the hotel and every available inch in her suite was filled with

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Rue Mogador. *Direction :* **Les Frères ISOLA** Tél. : *Gut. 52-03*

Vendredi 8 Juillet 1927, à 15 heures

UNIQUE RÉCITAL

ISADORA DUNCAN

Avec le concours de

l'Orchestre des CONCERTS PASDELOUP

sous la direction de M.

Albert WOLFF

AU PROGRAMME

Symphonie inachevée	*Schubert*
Ave Maria	—
Marche de l'Or du Rhin	*Richard Wagner*
Marche de Siegfried	—
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VENTE DES BILLETS AU THÉATRE MOGADOR

THE PROGRAMME OF ISADORA DUNCAN'S LAST DANCE RECITAL

the most gorgeous priceless flowers. Many thousand francs' worth. And yet, with all the tickets sold for this wonderful performance, the expenses had been so heavy that Isadora never got a penny, not even the price of her dinner, had she been without it.

The heartbreaking thing was that she had put off date after date for the matinée until it was now too late to give another performance, when she would have made money. She blamed every one but herself, and really it seemed to me, in spite of the lateness of the season, she could easily have danced several times more to sold-out houses.

She never got over this, having gone to such agony to reduce, and get in condition again, only to dance once. This broke her heart. Once she started to dance, she wanted to keep on. It was really all she wanted to do on earth, dance and dance, and keep on dancing.

That evening after dinner at Mme. Sartoris' house, she gave an entire performance. She danced the Resurrection and the Life, and decided then and there to go to Nice as soon as possible to prepare her new program, the Dante Symphony.

Before leaving for Nice, a day that came very near being disastrous but ended happily, was the christening of a baby of a friend of ours. Naturally Isadora had not been asked because every one felt the suffering it would have caused her and yet, through some perversity, she seemed to resent this and in a way did everything to prevent my going. I had never known her to be in quite so bad a humour.

We had luncheon together, which she delayed as late as possible, after which she came home with me while I changed my costume but she kept begging me to go into the coun-

try with her, saying that she would not be left alone, but I said, "Isadora, dear, you can come with me if you like. You know every one would love having you."

She turned on me furiously. I said, "I don't know what to do, Isadora. You seem in such an awful temper about something." We drove to a jewellery shop on the Rue Petit Champ, where I had ordered a little cross and chain with the baby's name and birth on it. It is a very pretty custom in Russia to place these on the babies at their birth. They are always given by the Godmother and worn by the child all its life.

As we continued our drive out Avenue De La Grand Arnee on our way to Neuilly, several times the street was blocked and as it was already four o'clock, the time I was due at the christening, I also began to get nervous, especially as Isadora was purposely delaying me. I don't quite remember how the argument started, but it had something to do with Isadora having insisted, the night before, upon having many very expensive brandies, using up the last pennies we had. I recall I said some vulgar things like, "If you would give up this excessive drinking, I would go with you to the end of the world." Isadora, in a perfect rage, turned on me, "Oh, then it's true what a wretched little man in the silk painting business told me. Then you do speak of me as a drunkard." Astounded, I asked, "Isadora, how can you say such a thing? I have never spoken of you but as an angel." "Well," she continued, "I must now believe the awful things I have heard you said about me and my drinking, when you can go off and leave me to-day."

When Isadora said that she actually believed I had criticized her drinking to others, I became furious. I jumped

out of the car and said, "Isadora, that you could believe such a thing is too much for me. I will never see you nor speak to you again in my life."

Isadora with tears streaming down her face, realizing how horridly she had hurt me, said, "Oh, Mary, if you desert me after twenty-seven years of friendship, then there is nothing left in the world to believe in." She continued, "Of course, I don't believe it. There's some demon in me to-day, I just wanted to hurt you."

Stretching out her arms, she begged me to return, and said, "That's why I scarcely mentioned you in my book, Mary, although you should have been on every page."

We both started to cry and I got back in the car. We cried all the way to Neuilly and to our friend's house. She drove away, saying "Give — my love — a lot of love for her and her baby."

When I entered the house, already half an hour late, and my eyes all red from crying, there was great distress, every one believing I had had an accident. After bathing my face we started for the church where the darling baby was christened.

CHAPTER XXI

ISADORA STRANDED IN DEAUVILLE (1927)

DURING all this financial anxiety Isadora could not obtain a penny anywhere, although she was getting almost daily offers from different periodicals for the rights to her memoirs. Some of the offers were fair enough for the countries they came from, but they had not the possibility of gaining as much as in America.

At last Isadora sold the English rights to the London Sunday Chronicle for 400 pounds. They were to give her 100 pounds on receiving the manuscript, the rest six weeks later. This came like a gift from Heaven as we were at the last gasp. But the way it was used would indicate how hopeless a job it was to arrange Isadora's affairs. Isadora's friend Mercedes D'Costa was again leaving for America, and Isadora took her to the train at TEN P.M., when she decided she would go as far as Havre to see her on the boat. So she and Vida accompanied Mercedes to Havre, leaving the hired car at the studio door. They went on board the boat where Isadora wanted Mercedes to hide her and Vida and take them with her to America.

Mercedes was quite willing to risk anything for Isadora, but didn't quite see the point of Vida. Isadora found this very heartless, Mercedes refusing to take Vida, and Isadora declared she would not leave him. As she left the boat, Mercedes handed them an envelope, saying "Take care of that. It will take you back to Paris."

IRMA DUNCAN AND THE PUPILS OF THE DUNCAN SCHOOL,
TAKEN IN NEW YORK CITY, 1928
Photograph by Arnold Genthe

As the boat pulled out, Isadora ran along the quai like a young athlete down to the very end. Later they took the little boat over to Trouville, as they thought it would be a lovely idea to spend the day at Deauville and return by train to Paris. They went to a restaurant, but before ordering, Isadora opened the envelope, and found the following note: "Darling Isadora, I wish this was ten times the amount, but this thousand francs is the last I have with me. Love, Mercedes." But there was no thousand-franc bill in the envelope.

They looked everywhere, but could not find it, evidently it had slipped out while they were walking around. They left the restaurant hurriedly with just enough money to send me a wire asking me to take the car which I would find standing in front of the studio hotel, and for Heaven's sake come at once and save them. I gathered together what few shekels I could, and packing a bag, left about three in the afternoon. When I arrived I went to the station and several hotels, but could find no trace of Isadora or Vida.

About eight o'clock, just as it was getting dark, I saw them strolling towards us, looking, oh, so tired, and weary. Isadora was transported with joy to find again her auto. No more trudging about the streets on foot. "Have you any money?" she said. "We are very hungry."

"Yes, I have enough to get you a good dinner."

"Oh, Vida, we shall have dinner at last. We have been running around all day with a sandwich and one glass of beer. After that we couldn't even sit down, as the minute you take a seat, a woman with a pouch strapped on her begins clamouring for pennies, so we had to keep walking all the time, fearing to miss you if we went down on the beach. And, oh, how I wanted to swim in that glorious

ocean! But even that we couldn't do without money. At last I have learned, and am beginning to realize that money is the most important thing in the world. If I had my life to live over again, instead of giving it away, I would gather it in, keep it and hide it. I am perfectly serious. The good one could do with money. Yet it seems to me a pity that people who have plenty of it scarcely know the happiness they could give others, but only think of some silly way to outdo their neighbours, by having more expensive things than theirs. Not one of them would give me the money to make my school while I am alive. It's too cruel to think of. Soon I'll be gone, and then what? When I think what a few dollars it would take to support one hundred children for a few years, and the glorious results! Imagine celebrating some national holiday with the children, like young goddesses, bringing back all the glory that was Greece.

"I always feel that if I could go to America and see Mr. Ford, and explain to him my idea of young America dancing, that he would understand and support my school. I have watched his career for years, and he is the only millionaire who seems to be seriously interested in the children of the future."

By this time we had reached Trouville, entering a darling little restaurant right on the sands, Madame Rizzi's, which years before had been the great fashionable summer resort for the beauties of Europe, who afterwards transplanted the pleasures of their society to Deauville. We had an excellent dinner, for which I had just enough money, and when about to return to Paris, Isadora decided that she would remain by the sea for a few days. She considered it a terrible

waste to have come to the sea and to go away without so much as bathing, or wetting her feet. No, she couldn't do that; the sea would never forgive her. Besides, she was very, very fatigued.

She told Vida we must stop a few days here, now that Mary had brought her bag. "We can go to a hotel while Vida goes back to Paris in the car, get the hundred pound cheque which will be there by this time, and return. A few days will do me a world of good. I am dying for sea air."

We went to the Hotel Royale, where they made us the very reduced price of 300 francs a day for our room. It was an adorable room overlooking the sea, and away went Vida in the car to get the hundred-pound cheque.

Immediately Isadora was transformed. Again she was protected and happy. Walking in the street without a penny or without a place to lay her head was not at all her idea of life. "We did that in our youth," she said. "Now is the time to reap a little of the rest and beauty we are entitled to. Now I refuse absolutely to be poor. I will die first. I hate shoddy, shabby poverty."

She ordered a dinner fit for a king, simple but exquisite, and a bottle of delicious champagne, to celebrate the occasion. There was always some occasion to celebrate, so that life took on an air of gaiety, if there was the slightest chance. Isadora always created happiness for all those around her, and forgetfulness for herself.

The next day, the next, and the next passed and we were greatly worried, especially as we tried without success to reach Vida in Paris by telephone. Finally, the fourth night we reached him. He said he had the cheque, but in his characteristically Russian way saw no need for hurry. We

tried to explain the necessity, as we were still sitting there without a penny. It was then about half-past one at night, and he had been unable to cash the check, it being in Isadora's name. We told him to get up and find the chauffeur and he could be in Deauville by morning. Sure enough he did, and arrived at 8:30 Sunday morning.

Never was man more welcome. Being Sunday, Isadora thought it a pity that we return immediately to Paris without showing Vida the Casino and all the bathing beauties of Deauville. So after dressing herself in one of my painted dresses, Vida, she and I strolled out and did Deauville, having a gorgeous day; and only by urging and coaxing could we get her to leave Monday morning.

Our hotel bill by this time was 4,500 francs, plus the four trips of the hired car to and from Paris. Upon arriving at Paris, we found ourselves again without a penny; after the month of agony it took to get the hundred pounds, it disappeared in four days. We were all beginning to get a bit weary of this.

It now felt very hot and stuffy in Paris, after the sea, and as there was no further reason for staying, as Isadora's MSS. was now finished in so far as it goes, Isadora decided to go to the studio in Nice, which she declared I would adore. "Just think, Mary, from the door you look right into the sea, and it's so quiet and calm there, with walls covered with blue curtains, and rose velvet couches and hundreds of cushions scattered all about; alabaster lamps throwing soft lights over everything. It's a little Paradise on earth, and with Vida playing heavenly music for us, what more could we want? There's only one drawback; we must find the money to get there."

As this seemed a solution of our present worries, I said

I would find the money if Isadora would promise to work on her new program. "Yes," she said, "I will; it just means saving my life. It's the only place I love. You'll go mad with joy when you see it."

Alice, Vida's friend, said if we would go immediately, she would take us down in her car. There was only one tiny hitch to this: Alice had to be back in Paris in three days, and if she could get us there in two days, she could come back by travelling day and night. But Isadora must promise not to loiter on the way. Isadora would have promised anything to get out of Paris in an auto and on to the sea. The sea kept calling her always; she was never happy except when she was near it and under its influence.

CHAPTER XXII

OUR LAST TRIP TO NICE (1927)

I SAW the hotel proprietor and told him that if he would accept a note for the hotel bill which had not been paid for three months, and which would be covered by the three hundred pounds coming from London, we would leave at once and return in October. There went the rest of the 400 pounds for the English rights.

Isadora insisted that I spend the night with her, but with visits, music, and dancing, morning found us without a thing packed, and if we expected to take advantage of her young friend's offer, we would have to leave that day before noon. But it was five o'clock when we finally made our departure with a great controversy going on between Isadora and the girl as to the baggage; as the car was a small one, there was not much room. Isadora wanted to pile it up and sit on it, but go it must with her. We at last persuaded her to ship it, but when we arrived at the Gare d'Orleans, she declared she couldn't, as it was mainly manuscripts and things she could not be separated from. After another hour, we finally managed to start, with the baggage piled high, and pushed in everywhere, and the girl headed straight for an attack of nerves.

We spent the night at Fontainebleau, Isadora in an awful state as Vida had not arrived. We were to meet him there, he having taken a train. About eleven o'clock some young students who were dining in the same restaurant

invited us to visit the American School of Music where a costume ball was going on. This we did, but Isadora found their manner of dancing very shocking and vulgar.

The next morning we started gaily on our way. It was glorious weather, and everything went happily and agreeably until about four o'clock when it began to pour. We stopped for tea, but Isadora by this time was thoroughly tired and, not quite used to being ordered about, decided she would stop for the night. Alice refused, saying that she could never get back in time for her engagement if we did not keep right on our way. This was a very bitter pill for Isadora so long accustomed to saying just when she would stop and when she would go, but we nevertheless continued in the pouring rain until ten that night, the girl driving like mad to make up for lost time.

At a wonderful little inn where the proprietor was famous as a chef, and who had one of the best wine cellars in France, we stopped for dinner and Isadora refused to go a step farther. In a spirit of mischief she insisted upon trying all kinds of wine, for which the girl, as I have previously described, had no capacity whatever, and now, being greatly irritated, she felt the effects at once, and coupled with the long day's driving in the blinding rain, she suddenly went off in hysterics. We had a terrible night. Half a dozen times I thought she would die, but Isadora, paying no attention, went peacefully to sleep.

The following morning, the girl, very pale, with a set resolute look, said, "I am ready to start and willing to take you, but we'll stop no more. If we go right on now, it will take all day and night." This was little calculated to suit Isadora but the girl meant it, and that was that.

For luncheon we stopped at the most disagreeable res-

taurant it had ever been our misfortune to encounter. I forgot to mention that the fourth member of our party was afraid of Alice, who sat beside her all the way as she drove the car, Ivan by name, a very handsome and charming young Russian, who from time to time took moving pictures of us.

Isadora for some reason could never see a couple in love, and besides the irritation of not being allowed to have Vida with her, there being only room for four in the car, he had gone on by train, although Isadora insisted he could sit on her knee; Alice decidedly objected. Due to this, much of the film which this Ivan was to take all the way down and finish in Nice, was left undone.

It is rather strange, Isadora's never being able to see two people in love. Any two, married or unmarried. I never found an explanation for this. It was so out of keeping with her character, and married couples were just the last straw; she couldn't endure them at all. She explained this by saying how horribly bourgeois this was, and how each one stood in the way of the other's development.

As we entered the restaurant Ivan, the young Russian, asked the pompous proprietor, who happened to come to the door himself, if they had anything fit to eat in the place. This was a good enough beginning for a restaurateur famous for his cooking. He replied that the food was all right if we thought we could afford to pay for it. That was rather a nice comeback, and I was just about to try to be witty when Isadora entered, smiling so graciously that the proprietor bowed to the earth, showing us in.

The waiter who took care of us advised us to take the regular lunch; Isadora as was her habit said she would

have nothing but cold roast beef and lettuce salad. The waiter said that would be all right, as this formed part of the regular meal; but the Russian being very hungry, said he would eat all the rest of Isadora's lunch. This started an argument with the waiter, especially as we had already ordered butter, which was extra.

The slightest argument of any kind at table always upset Isadora. She turned deadly white, and really couldn't stand it, having some sort of a nervous stomach. She would pay any price demanded, or walk out, but never could she endure an argument. How well all the restaurants knew this, and often charged her prices that they would never dare charge any one else. Without a word Isadora got up and left the restaurant, walking way out on the rocks and sat there beside the water, until we had finished, she not having eaten a bite.

I ate my lunch despite the proprietor, as we had to pay for it anyhow. We heard him refer to us as the "verdammt" Americans, which irritated a few other Americans in the place. Alice joined in the scrap and soon there was rather an amusing discussion, as to what we were doing with our American dollars in Europe, etc., etc., while Europe was long-suffering.

We gathered up Isadora and again started on our way, leaving the German proprietor of the French restaurant very much offended. Isadora scarcely spoke to any of us, but a little later said she would like to stop for tea and rest. Alice remonstrated, and the clouds that had been gathering between these two for a long time broke. Isadora completely lost her head and reproached the girl for allowing Vida to go all alone on the train, when we could just as easily have squeezed him in.

The girl was furious, and said, "I am still willing to take you, but if you are only amusing yourself at my expense, then it's different." Isadora replied she had never heard such brutality, that she had been driven at break-neck speed against her will. Alice explained it was the only way she could get there in time.

Isadora said the really important thing was getting her to Nice, and if Alice reached there, getting back really ought not to matter. Alice then suggested if Isadora didn't like the car and the way it was driven, she could very easily get out and take another, and that if she preferred the train, she would loan her enough money for two second-class tickets from Lyons to Nice, as that was all the money she had with her. Had it not been for the mention of second-class, all might still have been well.

Isadora paled with anger, said it had been many years since she had ridden second class, and couldn't understand why Alice dared to suggest such a thing. Alice replied it was good enough for her, and good enough for any one else. A few more unpleasant words, and I said, "Now, Isadora, that's enough. We will get out." I begged Alice to get on, as we were standing in the middle of the road, and take us as quickly as she could to Lyons, which she did at a mad pace.

She arrived at the Gare de Lyons, dashed in and returned immediately, throwing two second-class tickets in Isadora's lap. "There are your tickets to Nice," she said. "I refuse to take you a foot farther."

Isadora rose majestically and stepped out of the car, utterly ignoring the tickets. Alice picked them up, ran in, exchanged them, and handed me the five hundred francs. So there we stood, with our baggage strewn all about us,

five hundred francs in hand, the train for Nice pulling out, which didn't matter, as Isadora would never have got on it anyhow. A couple of porters picked up our baggage and we crossed over to the Terminus Hotel and held a council of war.

Isadora said she felt very ill, and that we must find an auto, as she would die, then and there, if forced to go by train. She begged me to give a check against my money which would arrive from America about the first, and that Raymond would certainly advance her this sum as soon as we got to Nice.

I let myself be persuaded to do this rather dangerous thing, but truly she looked like death, and the heat was something unbearable. I went from one car to another there, the chauffeurs asking all kinds of prices, 4,000, 3,000, 3,500 francs, and finally I found one splendid man who agreed to take us to Nice for 1,500; and at six o'clock after Isadora had eaten something we started.

Before we had gone a mile all the joy of heaven seemed to descend on her. Here she was, still going to Nice, in her own roomy splendid car, that she could stop and continue if she pleased, and with the most polite deferential chauffeur. This was worth any price.

Her growing fear of poverty and any meanness in life was pathetic. We were gay and joyous and happy. She threw her hat in the air. "Mary you're the only person in the world I can bear. I don't know why, but everything others do irritates me. They don't understand." We sang and laughed like children on a holiday, and it didn't matter in the least to her if we rode until midnight. She was splendid. Nothing upset or annoyed her. We spent

the night at a lovely hotel, up at seven in the morning, and on our way again.

The next night we stopped at a hotel in Orange, where Isadora had stayed before under such different circumstances. Yes, she was happy, everything soothed her, all was harmony and peace. She discovered here that she had lost her red bag, which she always carried and in which were her passport and her other papers and some little money, perhaps a hundred francs.

She was greatly distressed about the loss of this bag, and the hotel proprietor went to no end of trouble telegraphing to the inn where we had slept the night before. I turned green when she informed the maids that all her jewels were in that bag. They tore down the stairs to inform the proprietor that the famous rich Duncan's jewels, all her jewels, mind you, were in that bag.

"For the love of Heaven, Isadora, why did you say that? Don't you know they will expect a handsome reward for the return of your jewels?"

"Well, Mary, it's the truth, all my jewels are in that bag. My cigarette holder, my butterfly." Every one who knew Isadora had saved this butterfly ten times over. It was a tiny exquisite little thing not worth more than a hundred dollars at most. She was always trying to sell or pawn it when hard up, but as she could never get more than a few hundred francs, some one or other usually loaned her this, pretending they got the money for her. Several times I gave her three hundred francs and pretended I had pawned the thing, always returning it to her afterwards.

Soon the maid came running up the stairs with beaming face, to tell her the bag had been found. How we got out

of that hotel, not being able to tip them except for the regulation ten per cent, I don't know. This story of Isadora's jewels caused us great amusement, and for the rest of the journey there was nothing but happiness until we struck the forest fires raging all along the Côte d'Azure. This affected Isadora as though it were a personal matter. She couldn't bear to see the lovely landscape and forests spoiled by the fires.

As we approached Nice, she said she knew a lovely simple hotel where she had excellent credit, and we could go on to the studio the next day. We went to the Grand Hotel at Juan le Pin. We arrived at about six, so tired we fell asleep immediately, after sending word to Raymond to come at once about something important. I had given the check to the chauffeur, which was not to be presented for two days after he returned to Lyons, but I would have no money in the bank until the first.

At nine Raymond showed up, accompanied by Aei, his secretary, and Vida, who had just arrived. Raymond refused absolutely to do anything about the money for the check; Aei assuring us he could not possibly pay one penny. This was as I had expected. Yet even had I been sure of being hanged, I would have taken the same chance to get her out of Lyons to Nice and happiness. She could not have endured anything further.

I got through to Paris by telephone at once, and had a friend of mine place a sum necessary to my credit at the bank. Next day all was peace and harmony, but no money. Isadora, Vida and I went for a walk. We went to the beach, but not having a penny could not bathe or even sit on the sand. So we kept on walking in the broiling sun, slowly but surely roasting. The sun burned Isadora's

shoulders terribly, as we had no parasol, nor the price of one. But she marched on gaily, telling us what a fine thing it was to be by the sea, and in few days now we would have plenty of money and take a villa and have a gorgeous time.

"But how about the studio?" I said. "Aren't we going to the studio?"

"Oh, yes, the studio," said Isadora, and both she and Vida burst out laughing. "Oh, yes, you'll love the studio, Mary, although it has a few inconveniences. For instance, there's no water. In fact, it was never meant to live in; but we'll arrange something; perhaps we can get rooms next door in the hotel. However, there's no use thinking of it for a while; it's twenty-five miles from here. So just be happy and gay. Here we are, out of Paris, by the beautiful blue sea, in a lovely hotel, with delicious food, good wine, and so on. And all we've got to do now is to get a car, and then we can go every day to the studio and practice, and return here to swim and sleep."

"Did you say twenty-five miles a day, Isadora? That will make fifty altogether."

"Yes," she said, "we always did that before." I had a queer sinking feeling at the pit of my stomach. Here we were again in a trap. Nothing daunted, Isadora said, "Now we are here, the past is all forgotten. We must never think of yesterday. We must find money for to-day. Never think of what you're spending, but how to get the wherewithal to pay for it. We must only concern ourselves with the getting; the spending takes care of itself."

Just then we were passing a shop where they sold bathing suits. Isadora caught me by the hand and dragged me in. The little old woman who kept it remembered

Isadora, for she had formerly spent a small fortune there. She ordered bathing suits and caps and capes and shoes for both of us; blue for her and rose for me, and also some things for Vida. "If the hotel pays for these, to-morrow I will order a great parasol, then we can sit on the beach and swim."

Sure enough, the hotel paid, and the next day we, in all our glory with our orange and black-striped parasol, were the talk of the beach, and Isadora was the happiest being in the world that she had managed it all.

It took little to make this beautiful creature happy; she who had spent millions. The end of the week came round and there was no sign of money from America for the serial rights, and the hotel bill had inflated like a toy balloon. Isadora found they would advance her a little cash, so she rented a car by the week, and we rushed madly back and forth from Nice. In fact, every day, we went twice. Isadora could think of more places to go, the moment she had the car. Never for a second did she want to rest, and had it not been that the chauffeur had an unfortunate habit of wanting to sleep now and then, she would never have stopped. We couldn't get into the studio. For some reason the lawyers, to whom Isadora had sent a check for the rent, had not paid it. They said they had offered it, but as it was several days too late, it had been refused.

Isadora was terrified at the thought of anything to do with business. It always prostrated her. She suggested that I see the proprietor and arrange all this, but I point-blank refused, saying it was not my studio, but I was willing to go with her to see him, but would not go without her. It seemed a physical impossibility for Isadora to enter

a shop or business place, except some funny little place by the sea. It took weeks to get her to go into a shop to try on a pair of shoes, or gloves. And a really serious piece of business froze her to the bone. At last I consented to beard the lion in his den. The lion, or proprietress, really was the fattest woman I ever saw in my life. "I don't blame Miss Duncan for not coming here," she said. "Look at me,—Look what this climate has done to me."

This dear lady was the opera singer who had grown even too huge for a Wagnerian goddess. Both she and her husband were glad to have Isadora back, and also very glad to get the rent the lawyers were holding up. She said if Miss Duncan would sign a paper giving up the studio after October first, she could enter immediately. As this was exactly what Isadora wanted, her intentions being to return to Paris in October, I took the dear lady's husband with me, and digging Isadora out of the car in which she was hiding up the street, we went gaily on to the lawyers and arranged everything about the studio.

CHAPTER XXIII

THE FAMOUS STUDIO AT NICE (1927)

A HALF hour afterwards I had my first view of the studio, and really, it was too beautiful, like an old church, and yet one felt some peculiar, malevolent influence there. The walls were hung with Isadora's curtains which she always used on the stage, and a green carpet entirely covered the immense floor. At one end was a stage, which Isadora had arranged with great broad steps coming down from it into the studio, and on this stage and on these steps, she always seated the audience when she gave a recital, like an amphitheatre, she using the other end of the studio to dance.

I never could stay a second alone in this studio. If I found myself alone there, I would rush out of the door. Isadora always seemed to sense this, and nothing would induce her to sleep in the place. In the morning, however, she loved to go there and dance for two or three hours. There were her beloved curtains, music, pictures, all her possessions. Still there was something wrong.

We stayed about an hour, Isadora herself opening the windows and arranging the furniture. Then we sent for a woman to dust and put it in order. After this we went to the Nigresco Hotel garage, I finally inducing them to buy the car that had been in storage for six months, and from this sale we realized about nine thousand francs, which made Paradise seem a very poor place, indeed, compared with Juan le Pin. Also my money had arrived from America.

We were again in the favor of the gods. Then there followed such feasting, visiting, restauranting, night-clubbing, as only millionaires might have supported! Robert Winthrop Chanler, the famous painter, had arrived and taken a lovely villa. Also, there was my dear friend Clemie Randolph, Picabia, the adorable French painter and one of Isadora's great admirers, and many other very famous, delightful, agreeable people.

Every day Isadora found time to work several hours in her studio, and the rest of the time she enjoyed herself madly. Never have I known her to be more happy than she was at this time. She enjoyed life to the fullest, believing in the future, in herself, in her art. There was a sort of halo of joy about her. She was like a child who had been released from some severely disciplined school, free to run wild and follow her own sweet will. Thank God for these last few weeks of joy! They didn't last long.

With the nine thousand francs from the sale of the auto, Isadora decided to take a villa, where she could entertain her friends. She declared she longed for a permanent place and it must be by the sea. Then who knows, she might earn enough money from her Memoirs and dancing to build a school overlooking the sea, as she finally decided there was an evil influence of some sort in her studio.

We discovered a lovely little rose-colored villa, but the landlord was putting out the poor Italian who lived there, and this made Isadora quite ill and disgusted her with the entire place. We walked out of the notary's office where she was about to sign a five years' lease, Isadora saying, "Quick, Mary, quick, let's get out of this inhuman place. You're right; it's only made for millionaires and wasters. We will go and live economically at the little hotel beside

the studio, and I will practise and dance all day. I couldn't have lived a day in that villa after seeing the Italian woman's sad face as she spoke with the proprietor."

So we packed our things, Isadora herself packing all her dancing costumes in one trunk, paid our bills, and jumped in a car accompanied by our dear old friend Baron H.

We flew to the studio, again shouting with joy, delighted at our narrow escape. All the way we sang "Bye, Bye, Blackbird" and I'm sure the people passing thought we were daft. Then, upon entering our new quarters in the little hotel beside the studio, we got the shock of our lives. The proprietor insisted we pay a week in advance. Fortunately, for once, we had it, but this saddened Isadora.

"Don't you remember, Mary? I told you never to go near a cheap hotel. It's maddening." And she was right.

The day before we left Juan le Pin, Vida had gone to Paris. I don't know what it was all about, but believe he felt keenly his position of being unable to help Isadora. She had told me that had it not been for Vida, his music and devotion, she could never have existed through that long six months before I came, when she had absolutely nothing at all. She very keenly felt his going at this time, and rather resented it. However, we didn't discuss it, but I knew what was happening in her mind. The evening after he went, we took a long walk, Isadora telling me she would take me to the most amusing little place where only fishermen and sailors went, and where we would have the most extraordinary fish dinner. I knew this was just an excuse to get out and tear along by the sea.

For hours we trudged along this pitch-black road. I began to doubt whether Isadora knew where she was going, and she kept on saying we were quite right, and there was

some very special reason for going where we were going. She seemed so in earnest, and I knew she was suffering from Vida's departure, and this was a way of forgetting it. But at ten o'clock, as we had not yet arrived, I wanted to stop a passing auto and get back. But nothing would do; we kept on and on, walking on the rocks by the sea.

Finally we came to Port Juan, and there, sure enough, was a little hut with a kitchen at one end used as a restaurant. How she came to know of it, I can't imagine. She had never been there in her life, and I believe had only seen it in passing, but it gave her an excuse for this excursion. She mounted a few steps and sat at a table at one end of the place, looking out at the sea. I sat opposite her with my back to the other tables, she facing them. She seemed to have come to a place she had seen in a dream. She was looking unusually beautiful. Mme. Tetu, which we afterwards learned was her name, cooked and served the dinner for us, with some lovely red wine.

I remarked that the wine looked like rubies. Isadora said, "No, like blood." She held her glass up to the light, and as she did her eye caught that of a young man seated behind me who was dining with three others. I saw her smile and bow as though drinking to some one.

I turned and said, "Good Heavens, that's a chauffeur you are drinking to."

"Oh, Mary, how bourgeoise you are! He's nothing of the kind. Have you no eyes? He's a Greek god in disguise, and that's his chariot out there. She pointed to a lovely little Buggatti racing car, with red, white and blue circles around the tail. Sure enough, it was his car. A few minutes after they left, and as he drove off she waved to him, and he bowed. She said to me smiling, "You see I'm

still desirable"—then I knew how badly Vida's desertion had hurt her.

After he had gone, she asked Mme. Tetu where we could get a car like that, and the very wise Mme. Tetu replied that that young man came almost every day to the restaurant, and that he was agent for this car and was located in Nice. As we had no way of getting back to Juan le Pin, Mme. Tetu's brother offered to take us back in his fishing boat. As it was five or six miles, I couldn't have walked back if they had given me the town, nor could Isadora. On the way back she scarcely spoke. She was in a sort of ecstasy.

The next day we had lunch at Mme. Tetu's, this time going in our own car (ours for the moment). Isadora seemed a little disappointed at not seeing her Greek god there, and later in the afternoon we went on to meet Francis Picabia at the Carlton; the great meeting place was the bar.

As we entered the bar, the brother of the King of Spain ran up, embracing Isadora warmly. "Isadora, Isadora, you're more wonderful than ever. Oh, how glad I am to see you." (The next morning, while chatting on the beach with the Grand Duke Boris, Isadora said to me, "You see how popular I am with royalty. They don't seem to fear my Russian Bolshevik reputation.") Darling Picabia was sitting in a corner, waiting for us. He ran to meet Isadora, who folded him in her arms, saying "Francis, do you still love me?"

"Of course I do," he replied, looking roguishly about at his wife. And truly she looked irresistible this afternoon. After a delightful afternoon with tea, and coffee, and cocktails, Picabia invited us to stay to dinner.

"We have just discovered the quaintest little restaurant, where they make marvellous bouillabaisse. We're meeting a band of friends there at eight o'clock." Isadora was delighted, and said, "Well then to-morrow, I will take you to my place which I have discovered. I'm sure yours can't compare with it. And besides there is a young Greek god there you will want to paint."

Imagine our surprise when Picabia's restaurant turned out to be Mme. Tetu's little hut, our very own discovery. Isadora said, "It's just fate, that's all."

A number of friends met them, the lovely Nicole Grault, Paul Poiret's sister among them, but no sign of Isadora's Buggatti, as we now called both the auto and the young driver.

The next night there was to be a children's ball at the Reserve in Cannes. They invited us to come, and they said the friend who was giving a party would send his car for us. The next night Mr. Carpenter, a California millionaire, sent his Rolls-Royce, quite the biggest car I had ever seen, to fetch us, and again the dinner was arranged at Mme. Tetu's.

Isadora asked Mme. Tetu to give her address to the Buggatti when she saw him, as she was most anxious to buy a car like his. The old lady smiled her same wise smile, saying he was sure to be there the next day, and the reason for his absence was that some one had stolen his car and he had followed it to Lyons.

The dinner was great fun. We were all dressed like children; Picabia, marvellously like a nurse, with his lovely wife and Nicole Grault as pink and blue babies, his two charges.

Every one was delighted to see Isadora. She had simply wound a straight piece of painted silk about her, and might have been the guardian angel of the children. I am sure this was one of the happiest nights of her life. She was in an exalted state, and frequently turned to me saying, "Why have I this mania of persecution, and people not liking me? See how they all love me. Oh, I am so happy, so happy." We got home at four in the morning.

The Saturday before this Robert Chanler had given a luncheon party for Isadora at an old sea-side town, Antibes. There were about twenty guests, nearly all American, very well-known artists. The luncheon was most amusing. Bob remarked that a lady had tried to marry him before he left America. Isadora said, "I believe I had better marry you to save you from trouble."

He gallantly stood up, and kissing her hand, said he would be delighted. This caused great amusement, and many drinks to their health and happiness. By this time we were sitting out under the awning on the street, having coffee and liqueurs. A charming old chap was putting some finishing touches to a yacht in front of his workshop across the street. Bob called to him to come and drink their health, so he did. Isadora said the yacht he was making would take them to Greece on their honeymoon.

After many more cordials, we decided it would be a pretty piece of news for New York, and each and every one with the exception of Bob and Isadora put in five francs to defray the expense, and we cabled the good news to the New York *Mirror*. I believe it appeared on Monday, September 12th.

How happy and gay she was that day, sweet Isadora. Never in all the twenty-seven years of our friendship had

I known her so thoroughly to enjoy herself as at this luncheon by the sea.

Perhaps it was because she had come through a terrible time in Russia, and the calamity and suffering in Berlin. Certainly she seemed to have found her lost youth and spirits.

Our week was up at the hotel on Sunday, and we had notice to pay another week in advance, and nothing to pay it with. Isadora begged me to go to Lohengrin, who was now in his magnificent château not fifteen miles from us. She felt sure he would do something to relieve her financial distress.

I hated to do this, but I just couldn't see Isadora unhappy. So at eleven o'clock on Sunday morning, off I started, with a very heavy heart indeed. I picked up a passing auto, as we could no longer get credit for our own, without in the least knowing how I would pay him, and just before noon I arrived in the magnificent house where everything that good taste and breeding could suggest had combined to make a perfect home. And all this Isadora had thrown aside, and now she hadn't even food. Perhaps, in a couple of days not even a place to lay her head.

Lohengrin came in, greeting me affectionately, saying, "Well, Mary, I hope you've come to lunch."

"No, dear," I replied, "I've come on a far less agreeable mission although it has something to do with lunch, too." Never have I been able to ask any one for money. My heart beat so fast that I thought it would choke me, although Lohengrin had always been like a brother to me, and I had the greatest affection for him. Yet I would almost rather have died than ask him for help. He had always been so magnificently generous, and I knew that he

was now himself going through a great financial crisis, which meant conserving every penny to avert disaster. Still it had to be done.

He replied that under the circumstances he could do nothing. It would only be wasted if he did; he believed nothing would check Isadora's downward rush. In spite of all my efforts to the contrary, I burst into tears, and when he again insisted that I stay to lunch I replied that I couldn't possibly stay to lunch while Isadora was without food, but if he would kindly lend me a handkerchief I should be greatly obliged. He went upstairs and brought me a handkerchief. (Superstitious folks say that the gift of a handkerchief brings tears.)

Lohengrin took me to the door, and said, "Oh, I see you can afford an auto, when you could have come for a few cents on a tram."

"I didn't have the few cents," I called back as the car drove away. When I arrived at the hotel, the young English lad who acted as night porter loaned me seventy-five francs to pay for the car. He was a splendid little chap, and I afterwards helped him to get a much better job.

I then went into the little bar in front of the studio and asked the very nice old couple there who had just bought it, if they would roast a chicken immediately and let me have a bottle of champagne, and I would pay them Tuesday or Wednesday, when my next allowance would come from America.

They most kindly agreed to do this. Then I had the courage to face Isadora and tell her all that had happened. One never knew when Isadora was hurt, except for a peculiar pallor and a line that formed about the nostrils. She never cried or complained the way many women do.

I can still see the expression on her face when the dear old fellow entered with the sizzling chicken and a cooler filled with ice and a gorgeous bottle of champagne.

"I always knew you were grand, Mary," she said (this was the greatest compliment she could pay you), and in spite of everything, we had a very merry lunch. The old man had scarcely taken his departure with the tray when we started discussing Schopenhauer's World of Will and Idea.

CHAPTER XXIV

LOHENGRIN (1927)

ONE day the door opened suddenly without any warning, and Lohengrin walked in. Had Heaven opened its portals and given Isadora a glimpse of eternal beauty, she could not have looked happier. Lohengrin looked like some great god descended from above.

I suppose he felt sorry after I left. He always felt sorry for Isadora, but no one could cope with her extravagance. There were no explanations, no questions, simply love and tender greetings. What this meeting meant to Isadora no one will ever know. She had begun to feel she was no longer wanted on earth, that every one would feel better and relieved if she passed away. She often said, "I am beginning to be a great nuisance; nothing can be done with me, and I can no more change my habits than a leopard his spots," and then to have the person she adored come to her with love in his greeting! Especially, after he had refused to do anything for her.

"I thought I'd drop in to see if you have had lunch," he said.

"Oh, please don't speak of lunch," said Isadora in her daintiest manner, incidentally kicking the champagne bottle that was threatening to roll out from under one of the couches.

This day had too many emotions for me. I stepped out and went to my hotel. Perhaps as I stood on the balcony

looking out over the vast blue sea, I thanked God for his great kindness to my dear Isadora. Truly she needed something to help her bear the great burden of life, which was indeed heavy, and who could know so well the right words to say as the father of her little lost son. There are moments of beauty and events in life beyond comprehension.

Earthly love or desire had no part in this marvellous reunion. Just pity and tenderness on one side, and happiness that one was still loved on the other. When I returned to the studio about six, I heard the gramophone playing the Ave Maria, and Isadora was dancing as no one had ever seen her dance.

"Mary," she asked, "do you feel the life in this room? It's full of beautiful spirits. How beautiful it is! How wonderful!"

She continued, "But, my dear, why did you go away? I should have loved you to hear all the things he said. He is a lovely, lovely being, and I love him. I believe he is the only one I really ever loved."

"How can you say that, Isadora? Tell me now the absolute truth. Whom above all did you really love the best? And which would you choose?"

"Well, to tell you the real, real truth, Mary, I don't know. I seem to love each one of them to the uttermost limits of love, and if Ted, Lohengrin, the Archangel, and Sergei stood there before me, I wouldn't know which one to choose. I loved, and still love them all. Perhaps I'm many persons in one and perhaps many others feel as I do, but won't admit it, even to themselves. And so they go on, fooling themselves all their lives, but I could never fool myself or any one else for that matter."

Some friends came later and took us to the Casino at

Juan le Pin. The next morning Isadora and I went swimming in front of the studio. Here the beach is very bad, composed entirely of cobble stones, and utterly impossible to walk barefooted. I was obliged to wear my little tennis shoes even in the water. Being unable to swim with them, I took them off and tried to throw them back on the beach. I couldn't quite make it, and the waves gathered them up, and they were soon lost to sight.

But Isadora refused to leave them, and was very nearly drowned trying to dive for them. After this I had to crawl almost on my hands and knees, the cobbles hurt my feet, and I had to wait on the beach while Isadora went to the studio and brought me another pair. For this reason I refused again to bathe on this beach, no matter how Isadora insisted.

Lohengrin came with his car to take us to lunch about half past twelve. Just as we were leaving the studio Mme. Georges Hattois, the brilliant, well-known singer, and wife of Isadora's former manager, came to remind us that the next night we were to dine with her. She had by the hand her little three-and-a-half-year old golden-haired son. Isadora just touched the child's golden head and flew out to the waiting car, while Lohengrin stopped and spoke sweetly to the little child, and then we excused ourselves and drove off.

Isadora said she knew a lovely place to have lunch, on the very top of the mountains, called the Lantern. As Lohengrin had never heard of it, he was delighted to find a new place. So off we started, three radiantly happy creatures, all holding hands and talking joyously. When we reached this place, which was set in the side of the mountain, with a gorgeous view overlooking all the Côte d'Azure,

we found a sign saying the restaurant would open in three days.

"Well, we will come back in three days and have lunch," said Lohengrin. Then Isadora suggested the Reserve at Beaulieu and in a spirit of contradiction, while both she and Lohengrin were both gourmets, she chose the regular 25-franc lunch, which was very bad indeed. She always said she ordered simple dinners when dining with millionaires and the most expensive ones when dining with poor artists, and paying for it herself.

We didn't mind the bad lunch as we sat on a balcony jutting out into the sea. It was almost like being aboard ship. Isadora said, "Would I be considered an alcoholic if I asked for a cocktail?" As a matter of fact, she couldn't swallow a mouthful of anything before she had one or two cocktails.

Lohengrin said, "Certainly not, we will all have one."

"Yes, but not Mary," she said. "It makes her too talkative. And then Mary's in love, too, she has the most marvellous young French lover."

"Oh," said Lohengrin, looking at me a bit surprised.

I stared at her stupefied and would have replied, but she gave me such a kick under the table that my instep was black and blue for days after. When we went to the dressing room before leaving, I asked her why she had invented this pretty little story about my French lover. She said it created a light, gay atmosphere, and she couldn't bear to have him think we were too lone females without a lover between us. She evidently knew the psychology of these things.

Lohengrin was charm itself. And here was another blue ribbon day. During the drive home, he said, "My dear, you

don't know how you have hurt me by the interview you gave a paper saying you had put the Irish curse on me, and that I would lose everything I had. And by the way, it has almost come true."

"Oh that is all nonsense," replied Isadora, "but if I ever did put the Irish curse on you, I now take it off, and I assure you from this day on you will never have anything but the greatest luck, happiness and prosperity." And so the day ended, he having arranged with Isadora to meet her expenses, including a pianist, that she could have absolute peace of mind to prepare her new program which interested him very much indeed. He said he wouldn't be able to see her the next day, Tuesday, but Wednesday he would come at four o'clock.

I don't think Isadora ever thought of the financial part of this. Her great joy was at being again friends with this man she loved so dearly. In fact, for some reason she seemed to want to gather about her all the people she had ever loved, all the people she had loved best; and there was no question of forgiveness. She never had, or never thought she had, any grievance against any one.

When we reached the hotel, we found each in our letter box a note saying that our hotel bill must be paid within twenty-four hours. Personally, we didn't care, for Wednesday meant respite from all financial worries for a while. But it gave Isadora a fine chance for her philosophy, and to get back at me for my economical notion in coming to this hotel.

"You see how they treat us. They are utterly lacking in respect. We might be the concierge's daughters for anything they know about us, or care. I swear to you, Mary, it is the very last time I shall ever be induced to enter a

second-rate hotel in my life. I'd sleep on the streets first."

As we had no money to take a car or go anywhere, we went into the studio, and Isadora said there was nothing like exercise to make you forget your hunger, as we could not go out to dinner. So we exercised and danced and ran miles around the studio. About eleven o'clock we returned to the hotel, but Isadora was in a terribly restless state again, as she always was when she hadn't an auto and couldn't go tearing around.

She stood on the balcony and pointed to the stars. "Do you see that star, Mary? That's Aphrodite. She completely rules my life. I rise and set with her. Aphrodite and the sea are the two greatest influences in my life. I'm their slave."

About midnight she declared life was not possible without a car or an aeroplane, that never again would she spend another night at home. She simply couldn't endure to be indoors. Out, out, tearing along, anywhere, any way. How she wished she knew where to find Buggatti.

She finally induced me to go for a walk, really meaning to pick up an auto somewhere, and ride for hours and hours, tearing about until morning, as she could not sleep. Now all the joy of the day had faded, and the old longing had again taken possession of her. Trying to rouse her, I said, "Isadora, what was the greatest or happiest period in your life?"

"Russia, Russia, only Russia," she cried. "My three years of Russia with all its suffering were worth all the rest of my life put together. There I reached the highest realizations of my being. Nothing is impossible in that great weird country. No, Mary, you must come with me

to Russia. We will go soon. If they will support my school I will spend the rest of my life there."

"But Isadora you are not a Bolshevik."

"I don't know what I am. I sometimes think I am the most dyed in the wool aristocrat. But one can't classify artists. They just float above things."

"But you are not in sympathy with much that is being done there."

"I know nothing of politics or politicians, and don't understand some of the present rulers. But the idea back of it all—for that I would give the last drop of blood in my veins. I would be gladly cut in little pieces to advance the great idea of humanity one little bit."

And this she meant. This was the real Isadora.

Tuesday morning she came to my room, which was immediately beneath hers, saying, "Now, who's lazy? I've been up practising for hours. You said I was getting lazy and wouldn't work, when I have worked my poor legs off, and have done more real strenuous work in my life than half the labouring men."

But I still refused to get up, declaring I could not stay up all night, and get up in the morning. Besides, I wasn't feeling very well. "You must get up, dear, don't you remember the hotel's notice, twenty-four hours?"

"Well, they'll have to lift me out, bed and all. I'm on a strike, and refuse to budge."

"But will you come swimming in a half hour?" she pleaded.

"No," I said. "It hurts my feet over there; it hurts my feet too much. Besides, I'm going to order our lunch up here, and let them dare to refuse us."

This Isadora wouldn't have at all. It was bad enough

to have to live in the hotel, but eat their food, never. She had found an American dollar bill in my pocketbook. She said, "You stay here perfectly still, and I'll give you a wonderful surprise," and started out.

I went on the balcony and watched her down the street. She had on my red painted dress with the cape effect, and I saw her swinging down the road. No one on earth ever walked as Isadora did. All the poetry of motion was expressed in this simple act of walking. She walked as the birds sang, harmoniously. I could see the great scarlet and yellow roses on her dress. They looked like a garden. And with her Indian hat and sandals she could never possibly have been taken for any one but Isadora.

Majestic she looked. Then she turned in from the sea, and I saw her no more for an hour. I really became very nervous, for I feared any day what she might do, when suddenly my door stood open, and there stood Isadora with a tall, thin young man, he carrying packages and a bottle of wine. "When your friend is ill," said Isadora, "and refuses to get up, don't scold and upbraid her. No, like an angel, go and return with cold ham, tomatoes, figs, wine and a handsome young man."

Daintily she arranged all this on a tiny table beside the bed, and gaily we lunched, all three. She could make a fête out of nothing on earth, darling wonderful Isadora!

The young man told me how he had been on his way to find Isadora when they had met accidentally. He had a cable from his New York paper, to find out the truth of her engagement to Robert Winthrop Chanler. I burst out laughing, and when I got a chance alone, told Isadora about the cable, and begged her not to spoil it all.

By this time a maid kept running up the stairs every

few minutes, saying, "Another young man to see Miss Duncan." There was a carload of newspapermen standing two and three in front of the hotel, walking from there to the studio and back. Our young friend called and saluted them from the balcony, saying Miss Duncan had just flown away, after she had given him a wonderful interview.

After a while we descended and invited them all in to the studio. Isadora would neither deny nor affirm the report, saying they could form their own conclusions, but that Mr. Chanler was at home tearing up all his old love letters.

They asked what was the name of the yacht spoken of. Without a second's hesitation Isadora replied, "The Bobadora." She said, "Mr. Chanler will tell you all about it; you must all come and dine with us on Thursday."

There was much music and dancing, and then Isadora said she would show them how they danced the tango in Buenos Aires, and she did. Personally, I could never bear to see her dance it, and while all the men were convulsed with laughter, I sat with tears streaming down my cheeks.

I would often go home in a rage, declaring I would never speak to her again; she danced it in so realistic a manner, declaring that was the way it was meant to be, that it was danced only to excite the lowest emotions. The newspapermen left about six o'clock, and Isadora threw herself on a couch and slept instantly. Fifteen minutes later, in answer to a timid knock, I opened the door and there stood a handsome young man, apologizing for his costume, as he just came from a job, saying Mme. Tetu had given him my address, telling him I had wanted to buy a Buggatti. I told him rather sharply that I was not Miss Duncan but if he would leave his card I would give it to her. He replied politely with a very modest air.

In a half hour I awakened Isadora, as we were expected for dinner in Nice at 7:30 with M. and Mme. Hottois.

"Isadora, Buggatti was here while you slept," I said. She sprang from the couch like a tiger.

"I don't believe you, Mary. It's some silly joke. You would have awakened me, you never would have sent him away without telling me."

"Oh, yes I did," I said.

"Well, then I'll never forgive you. Good heavens, can't you understand how terribly important it is? I can't explain why, and you wouldn't understand. I don't understand myself, but I must see that young man."

"Well, there's his card," I said. But she was terribly upset.

"Mary, what have you done? We must find him, the first thing in the morning."

"Isadora, I believe you are losing your mind. What can this chauffeur have to do with you?"

"I tell you he's not a chauffeur, but a messenger of the gods. He's divine."

Personally, I hadn't noticed it, but I had seen him dressed as a simple young workingman, certainly very handsome, but that's all.

"Well, now it's time to think about how to get to Nice," I said, "and maybe find the hotel room closed when we come back. But I don't think that will matter to either of us; we can sleep in the studio."

Isadora said, "I will never sleep another night in that hotel after to-night. I won't be insulted by those people. To-morrow we will go away." We went to the hotel and told them to have the bill ready for the next day, as we were leaving, and they might have gone to the trouble to find

out who we were before they took such high-handed methods.

As a matter of fact, Isadora always paid her bills one day or another. She dressed as she did every evening, wearing her red shawl, when the maid came up, handing me a letter, and in it was a check from Mrs. Rubelea, asking me to get some flowers for Isadora.

Surely some kind God was looking out for us. Now we had the price of several taxis, and to-morrow full of promise. So gaily we went off to the dinner. These adorable people themselves had prepared this dinner of just the things Isadora liked. Their theatre is in an old church, and they had arranged dinner in a picturesque old garden.

Just as we sat down to table, the hostess, believing for some reason it might please Isadora, brought her exquisite little three-year-old son to the table. Isadora grew pale as death, trying her best to conquer her feelings; but suddenly she put her head on the shoulder of the young man next to her, a newspaperman, whom she had insisted on bringing to the dinner as we met him on our way. (One of Isadora's peculiarities was that when invited for dinner she was apt to appear with four or five friends.)

The host quickly brought some cocktails, and Isadora drank one or two. He said, "What do you think of our boy?" She couldn't speak, her eyes blinded with tears. Then the dear baby, pointing to Isadora, said, "What's the matter with the beautiful lady?"

Isadora gave a shriek and flew out of the garden, wildly followed by the men. I tried to smooth things over and went after them, but couldn't find them anywhere. I came back, and after an hour or so Isadora came back with both men. She had gone to a café in the neighborhood. But by this time the little baby had gone to bed.

Isadora apologized for going away, and kissed them both warmly, and no one again referred to the episode. How wonderful artists are, how understanding! No wonder they can't live with other people. They speak a different language from the rest of the world, and only understand each other. Isadora left before I did. I waited for the car we had ordered to return, and the newspaperman had taken her home.

I went to her room on returning but she was absolutely sound asleep, or unconscious, for she never heard me open the door, and I returned to my room.

CHAPTER XXV

ISADORA MEETS BUGGATTI AGAIN (1927)

THE next morning I was awakened by Isadora's entering my room about seven o'clock. "Mary," she said, very quietly, "if you have the slightest affection for me, find me a way out of this cursed world. I cannot live in it another day, in a world filled with little golden-haired children. It's beyond human endurance. Not drink, not excitement, not anything can ease this horrible pain I've carried about for thirteen years." (Her children were drowned just thirteen years before.) And now you tell me you are leaving to return to Paris. You may be sure, Mary, before you've gone ten miles, I shall have walked into the sea; and this time I shall take the precaution to tie an iron around my throat."

She looked so piteously helpless, I got up and putting my arms around her said, "Isadora, I promise you, that come what will, I will never leave you again, never, never. I did not realize how horribly you suffered. Forgive me if sometimes I seem heartless and try to stop you from doing things that seem to me foolish."

"Now, that's right, Mary. If you will only stay by me and see the thing through, just stick to me, I know I will yet make my school. We'll go to Russia, get the children, and we'll end in a burst of glory yet. You're grand, Mary, you're just grand. Why, what am I sad about? Hurry, we'll get out; we'll sell everything in the studio, everything,

at any price. We'll give all the couches to the children in the hospital, and with the check that Lohengrin is giving me to-morrow, we will buy an auto; and after a wonderful trip through the vineyards—yes, I must go through the vineyards once more; it's wonderful to drink the fresh juice from the press—then on to Paris, and on to Russia. Only wait two days more, Mary, and I swear I'll accompany you to Paris."

And she did, but closed within a leaden casket.

We went to the studio, where a man met us to see about buying everything in the place. He began by offering 250 francs for a stove which Isadora told me cost 8,000. I learned after she meant 800. Then he offered 150 francs apiece for the great couches; there were 18 of them. This displeased Isadora, and besides she had decided to give them to the hospital. So instead of sacrificing them, she put him out.

After this we went to Nice immediately.

She told the driver to go to the Helvetia Garage, the address on the card Buggatti had given me. She asked if a Mr. B—, the proprietor, was there, and was told he was out on a job, but would be back in the afternoon. She said she wanted to buy a car, and asked him to come to her studio at five that afternoon, Lohengrin being expected at four. She went to one or two cafés, and then to her milliners, leaving some hats to be arranged. We ordered a cake sent to Raymond's studio for the little children, as he had returned to Paris and they were alone. Then she said, "Now we will have a wonderful lunch, Mary, such as you have never tasted, to celebrate that we were now going to work together for the school forever."

This was rather a large order, but I was delighted with

anything that would make her forget the events of the evening before. She seemed singularly beautiful that day. We went to the sea front, and nestling among the old-fashioned Spanish architecture, found a famous restaurant.

Here we descended several steps to a verandah, but quite on the street, and quite the most marvellous fish I had ever tasted was served—not like any other fish in the world. This with a salad and melon and a beautiful wine, and the morning was complete.

Isadora declared she wished to look her very best to-day, for an old beau and a young one. She went to the hairdresser's after lunch, and even the man who dressed her hair could not keep his eyes off her. This truly was her great day. Her hair shone like one of Titian's pictures. She was strangely beautiful, this woman of almost fifty, whom even I believed to be much younger. She could have charmed the heart of any one in the world.

Years have very little to do with life. One can never count her youth by her years; she was youth and beauty itself. "I don't know quite what it is, Isadora, but you are too beautiful to-day," I said.

"You see what a little happiness does," she said. "Stick on the job, Mary, and we'll ride to glory, I promise you."

We went back to the studio after stopping at the bank to see whether my money had come (it came the next morning when I no longer cared or needed it). On returning to the studio, she changed things about, rearranging the furniture, and closing all the windows. She had a horror always of outside noises in the studio. It must be out of the world, and one partly got this illusion by the heavenly blue curtains hung all about the wall, which gave a sense of vastness, and silence, and space.

Lohengrin did not come at four. Isadora grew more radiant every moment, as though she had some wonderful secret that she felt bursting out, but could not tell to any one. "Oh, Mary, Mary," she would say every little while, and then go on dancing again.

Just before five I heard the same timid knock of the night before, and for some reason it sent a chill through me. I opened the door, and sure enough there was Buggatti, with his laughing boyish face. (I wonder whether he will ever have that same happy expression again. I fear not.) I asked him to come in, and not approving at all of this, I took my book, saying to Isadora, "Here is your Buggatti; I am going to the hotel." She called out to me, but I went on.

At about six-thirty I was sitting in my room talking to Ivan, the young Russian boy who was supposed to have been working every day on the films of Isadora. He asked me to try and patch up the little quarrel between Isadora and his young friend, Alice, when suddenly Isadora burst in, rolling with laughter. She threw herself across my bed, screaming half hysterically, and half laughingly; "I've lost them both, Mary; I've lost Buggatti, and I've lost Lohengrin; and I've lost the check, too. Isn't that just like me? I can't stand success or prosperity, it's no use. I always get caught."

She then explained between roars of laughter that Lohengrin had come at 5:30 instead of 4, and there she was sitting beside Buggatti, telling him about her art, dancing, etc. She found out he was a flying ace. Of course, that settled it. Here was what she was always looking for —a man not afraid of anything. She would get an aeroplane, and together they would fly to America.

As Lohengrin entered, seeing the young mechanic beside her, he said, "I see you haven't changed."

"Oh, this young man has come to show Mary a Buggatti, which she intends buying." Poor Isadora! She was rather bad at lying. Lohengrin said he was much surprised that I intended buying a car after what I had told him Sunday, as he was sure if I had the money for a car, I would spend it for something much more necessary.

"Well, she's like that," said Isadora. "Perhaps she only wants to try it out." She turned to the very embarrassed young man, and said, "You are coming at nine to-night with the little racing car."

He said he would, looking very sheepishly at the handsome stately Lohengrin, and left.

Lohengrin told her he had been detained and must leave immediately, but would come in the morning to take her to lunch and give her the check he had promised. He had not been able to attend to all these things that day.

She told him we were to go at ten o'clock that night to hear a concert given by a pianist she had intended to play for her. He said he would like very much to join us, and if he felt well enough he would come by for us. His family passed at this moment to pick him up in their car, as they were going to Juan le Pin for dinner. He waved good-bye, saying he would stop on his way back if he felt well enough.

As he drove away, she came to the hotel. "Now we will see what we will see," she said. "I don't believe he will come, or Buggatti, either."

We talked until about 7:30. Isadora dressed as she was in her pleated skirt, and the famous Chinese red shawl that I had painted for her. This shawl was two yards long and sixty inches wide, of heavy crêpe, with a great yellow bird

almost covering it, and blue Chinese asters and Chinese characters in black—a marvelous, lovely thing, the light of Isadora's life. She would go nowhere without it. When she was not wearing it, she hung it from the balcony of her studio in Paris, so that she could always look at it. Charmed by the figures, she pretended to read meaning into the letters.

She said "Let's go across the street to Henri's and have a cocktail." We sat outside Henri's for a while, Isadora and Ivan each had a cocktail, and I a glass of port. Then Ivan invited us to dine with him. Isadora accepted, provided we dine there; and we first went across the street to the hotel, where she wrote a little note for Buggatti.

We went to the studio, and there she pinned it on the studio door, the very last words she ever wrote. "Je suis en face chez Henri." She skipped all the way back to the restaurant, simply wild with unaccountable joy. She said, "If you could have seen Lohengrin's face when he saw Buggatti, you'd know he still loved me. Oh, I am so happy. When Buggatti comes, I'm off to the moon, so don't be surprised if you never see me again."

Just as we were finishing our very simple dinner, an immense dark cloud seemed to descend on our table between Isadora and me. I gasped, "Oh, My God, Isadora, something terrible is happening."

Isadora cried, "Mary, for Heaven's sake, what's the matter? I never saw so tragic a face. What is it? Why are you trembling? Waiter, bring a glass of brandy." I said I didn't want any brandy and would be all right in a moment. The waiter brought the brandy, and Isadora insisted that I drink it. This was just nine o'clock.

Isadora said, "It's just nine o'clock, we must hurry."

RAYMOND DUNCAN ACCOMPANIED BY HIS SISTER, ELIZABETH DUNCAN, AT THE FUNERAL OF ISADORA DUNCAN IN PARIS

She took my arm and said, "Now, Mary, what is the matter?"

And I answered, "Please, Isadora, don't go in that auto. My nerves are terribly unstrung; I'm afraid something might happen to you."

"My dear, I would go for this ride to-night even if I were sure it would be my last. Even then, I would go quicker. But don't worry, Buggatti is not coming."

We went into the studio, and she turned on all the lights, and the gramophone, and began to dance wildly. Suddenly from the window she saw Buggatti drive up with his car. She started for the door. I pleaded, "Isadora, please put on my black cape, it's quite cold."

"No, no, my dear, nothing but my red-painted shawl."

I went out first, and Ivan followed her, also throwing her own red woollen shawl, in spite of her protests, around her. (The one in which she always danced the Marseillaise.) I ran out ahead of her, and said to Buggatti, "I don't believe you realize what a great person you are driving to-night. I beg of you to be careful, and if she asks you to go fast, I beg you not to. I'm terribly nervous to-night."

"Madame, you need have no fear," he replied, "I've never had an accident in my life."

Isadora came out; seeing her red shawl, he offered her his leather coat. She threw her red-painted shawl about her throat, and shook her head, saying: "Adieu, mes amis. Je vais à gloire."

Those were the last words Isadora Duncan ever spoke. One minute after she was dead.

CHAPTER XXVI

ISADORA'S DEATH

HOW can I explain just what happened? As the car started slowly, it had hardly gone ten yards, when I noticed the fringe of her shawl, like a streak of blood, hanging down behind, dragging in the dirt. I called, "Isadora, ta chale, ta chale." Suddenly the car stopped and I said to Ivan, "Run quickly to Isadora and tell her her shawl is hanging down and will be spoiled."

I believed they had stopped because I called, and I rushed towards them. Several machines had stopped, and Buggatti was screaming, "J'ai tue la Madonne, j'ai tue la Madonne." I ran to Isadora, and found her seated just as she had left me two seconds before, except that her beautiful head was drawn down against the side of the car, held fast by the shawl.

This powerful racing car was a very low, two-seated affair. The seat of the driver was a little in advance of the other occupant, so that Buggatti would have to turn around to see her. There were no mud guards on the car, and as Isadora threw her shawl around her neck and across her shoulder, the heavy fringe hanging down behind caught in the rear wheel on her side. Naturally a few revolutions of the wheel dragged her poor beautiful head forward, crushing her face against the side of the car and holding it as in a vise. The very first revolution of the wheel had broken her neck, severing the jugular vein, and as she had

always wished, had killed her instantly, without one second's pain or knowledge of what was happening.

Not realizing that she was dead, but believing the shawl was strangling her, I instantly tried to loosen it from her warm, soft neck. Calling for a knife, I ran to the balcony of the restaurant, snatched a knife and ran back. Realizing its uselessness, I called for a scissors, which somebody handed me instantly. Ivan cut the fringe and part of the shawl from the wheel.

I called frantically for a surgeon, for help, but people seemed dazed. A car had stopped just beside us and I begged two or three of the men to lift Isadora in, not knowing to whom the car belonged nor caring. I sat beside her in the back seat, and held her in my arms, while the driver and his wife sat in the front.

I urged and urged them to go their fastest, remembering never to lose my head for a second, realizing that Isadora's only hope was my being calm. We had been on our way to the hospital about five minutes, when the police stopped us. Begging them not to interfere but to come with us, they stood one on each running board, and we continued straight ahead like mad for the hospital. All the while I was trying to get Isadora to breathe but when I saw her dear eyes blinded from the blow against the side of the car and her beautiful little nose which she so prided herself on, destroyed by the sudden impact and disfigured forever, somewhere deep within me, I never wanted her to come back to all that horror and suffering.

A peculiar change had come over her face. I felt her pulse, but in spite of its stillness, I couldn't realize, I couldn't, that there was even a possibility that she was dead.

At last we arrived at the hospital, where they did not want to let us in, believing she was dead and they are not allowed to take dead people in. But I so insisted and even took one end of the cot myself on which they had placed her, that almost unconsciously the attendants helped me, and we carried her inside. I begged them to get the best surgeons and doctors immediately, to spare no expense; but already there was a doctor kneeling beside her who said, "Madame, calm yourself; there is nothing to be done. She was killed instantly."

Oh, God! oh, God! There was I alone, and Isadora lying dead. I tried so hard to be brave, to hold on to my senses, which were swimming. The chief of police, taking me by the arm, asked me if I could give him any information about the accident, and at the same time, giving instructions to have Isadora taken to the morgue. "I will do anything you ask, answer all questions, if you will permit me to stay beside Isadora."

He told me that was impossible; she had to be taken to the morgue. At this I became frantic, saying, "No, never, over my dead body. I will never allow you to take her to the morgue. I couldn't endure it; it's a sacrilege to take Isadora Duncan to the morgue. But if you will permit me to take her back to her studio, I will do anything you like. For God's sake do this. Can't you see I'm all alone and I must stay with her?"

Never will I forget the kindness and courtesy of all these people. The Chief said, "If the landlord will permit her to be placed in her studio, I myself will attend to everything for you."

"Then you will give me your word of honor that they

will not move her from here until we get the landlord's permission?"

Like one in a daze I was led out to a car. First we went to the Police Station, where they asked me countless questions, and where, Heaven be thanked, were all our newspaper friends of the day before. Those dear kind press men with whom she had laughed and danced just a few hours before. They attended to sending telegrams to the family and helping me in every way.

The Chief of Police and I returned to the studio, where we found the proprietor, who instantly gave us permission. Everything belonging to Isadora was then locked up by the Chief, and I was taken to the hotel, where he locked our rooms with everything in them, sealing them legally, and then he left me on the balcony of the little cafe, saying, "Wait here, and I will bring her back. You can depend on me."

After about two hours, which seemed an eternity, I heard the tramp of horses carrying our Isadora home. They placed her on one of her lovely couches, but in spite of all my entreaties to stay with her, they brought me out and closed the door. So there alone was left all there was of the greatest being of our time. Most of the night I stood at the window, looking in. I couldn't bring myself to go near the hotel.

The next morning I had to go to the police at nine o'clock to identify the cursed shawl, and when they held it out, and also the other woollen one, both saturated with her precious blood, I thought the end of all things would come. Quietly I went back to the studio, and already they were bringing me cables from America, where the news had carried.

Among them was a cable from the Bell Syndicate, saying they had accepted her contract for the serial rights to her Memoirs, and the money had been cabled to a Paris bank. What a mockery life is! This money she had been waiting so eagerly for had been following us about for three days, from Juan le Pin, to Nice and then to the studio.

When the coroners and doctors had finished, I dressed Isadora in her red dress and her dancing veils, and there, in the midst of her great couch, surrounded by myriads of the flowers she loved best, she looked like a little Tanagra figure lying in a garden. We lighted the studio with hundreds of candles, and with flowers everywhere, it was like a blue chapel. Across her feet I had thrown her purple mantle which made a pool of light like a reflection from heaven.

People told me afterwards that it was so beautiful that they stood breathless when they entered. She would love it so, that was what made it possible. After they had made arrangements to take Isadora to Paris, they placed her in a zinc-lined box. Across her breast I placed one solitary red rose, with just my heart's blood, and three sprays of lilies of France, one from Augustin, one from Elizabeth and one from Raymond. Then a single flower from each of her dearest friends across the sea—Mary Fanton Roberts, Ruth Mitchell, Eva Le Gallienne, Mercedes D'Acosta, Preston Sturgis, Edward Steichen, Arnold Genthe, and a little bunch of roses from her school, her adopted children. Then they solemnly closed it and soldered it fast. I threw her purple mantle over it all. This was the mantle she always wore when she danced the Resurrection.

At the station I entered the car and covered the floor and windows with her favorite flowers, until it looked like a

beautiful garden. Lohengrin had never left me from the morning after the accident. All that was done was done by him. We never spoke. We just did things as we knew, the way she would love them.

Raymond and Vida had come from Paris and went back with us in the train. As the train was pulling out, Lohengrin with a heavenly kind smile handed me a pillow, saying, "Try to rest a little, Mary."

The train had scarcely started to move, when the most extraordinary thing happened. It had been pouring rain all day, but the instant that the train started, the sky darkened, and a perfect hurricane almost blew every one out of the station. They say they had never known anything like it before in Nice.

As there were no sleepers on the train—a funeral train never carries any sleepers—Raymond, Vida and I rode in a day coach. When we arrived in Paris, Elizabeth and a group of friends met us. As the casket was being taken from the train, I just remember draping her purple robe over it, as I couldn't bear any one's seeing the coffin, whereas her cloak was part of her. The next thing I remember, some one was saying, "Mary, why haven't you gone on with Isadora?"

It seems that Raymond and Elizabeth had gone off with Isadora in the coach, and had left me there. Perhaps I had moved aside. I don't remember. I had not been asleep for many hours, and must have been dazed, and probably had wandered off, pushed by the surging crowd. A friend took me in a taxi and we arrived at Raymond's studio before they did. Once again Isadora's blue dancing carpets covered the floor, and her beloved blue curtains hung about.

Everything took on the same atmosphere as her studio at Nice.

After they brought her in, I again draped her purple cloak across the casket and right across her heart was placed a great spray of red lilies. On the streaming red ribbons was written, "From the heart of Russia, which mourns Isadora." Flowers and telegrams continued to come from everywhere. An appealing message came from Irma Duncan, Isadora's one pupil who remained with her to the end, and who was off touring with the school in far-away Russia, "Try to await me. I am on the way." Unhappily this couldn't be done.

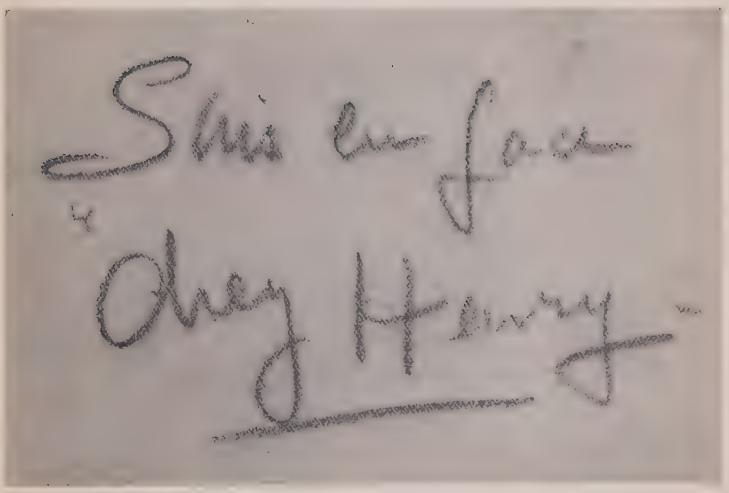
All the greatest souls in Paris—painters, sculptors, musicians, actors and actresses, diplomats, ministers, editors, names that had gained a place in the world, came to honor Isadora. Isadora's dear friend Ralph Lawton played in the adjoining studio the music Isadora had danced, and the great funeral march as she was carried out.

As it was American Legion Day in Paris, there was great celebration, and the cortège had to make many detours which brought us through all the weird French quarters of Paris. How Isadora would have loved this! These were the people who knew and loved her. Thousands lined the streets, most of whom had seen her dance. The populace of Paris adored her, and there was scarcely a dry eye all along the road.

Paris was wildly decorated with American flags. Every one thought they were meant for the soldiers, but I knew that America unconsciously had decorated Paris for one of its greatest Americans. She had brought her American art to all parts of Europe, and while all Europe bowed in sorrow

STUDIO
D'ISADORA DUNCAN
343, PROM. DES ANGLAIS
NICE

SECRÉTARIAT :
349, PROM. DES ANGLAIS
TÉL. 58-67



LAST NOTE OF ISADORA, LEFT PINNED ON A DOOR FOR BUGGATTI, AND WRITTEN LESS THAN AN HOUR BEFORE HER DEATH

for this great artist, old Glory waved her a grand farewell.

Just as we passed in front of the Trocadero Theatre, where Isadora had danced to five thousand people at a time and where many more had acclaimed her from outside because they could not gain entrance, there on the very pinnacle waved the Stars and Stripes of her native land, at the same instant, going in the contrary direction and right in front of the Trocadero, was passing the contingent from California. When they saw the Star-Spangled Banner, which Raymond had so sweetly and thoughtfully thrown over the casket at the last moment, they stopped to ask, "What American was passing?" We told them California's pride. Hundreds of years from now California will be known as the birthplace of the greatest dancer—the greatest artist—and the greatest American of all time.

As we reached the cemetery, Pére La Chaise, over ten thousand people were there, crowding the alleys so it was impossible to move. Whole cordons of police tried to make way for the cortège. Old people hobbled near who had seen her dance twenty years before. Mothers held their children up, telling them to remember that they had seen the funeral of the great dancer, the great Isadora Duncan, and every one spoke in whispers of the cruel accident to her children.

The students of Beaux Arts sobbed aloud. Young soldiers stood with their heads bowed and it took a very long time before we reached the crematory. The last time I had entered there was to accompany the remains of Isadora's wonderful mother and once before that, when I had accompanied Isadora to cremate her two little children and their poor nurse.

Memories, memories, memories! I will never enter that crematory again alive.

At last we had arrived at the steps that lead to nowhere—the crematory steps. The cordon of police with the greatest difficulty begged the surging crowd to give way to permit the family to pass. Elizabeth held my arm and somehow we mounted the steps and found ourselves within the chapel whose altar is a purifying furnace, leaving nothing but a handful of silvery ashes.

Albert Wolfe, the great conductor, who conducted Isadora's last performance in Paris, had promised me he would carry out Isadora's oft-repeated wish. She had always said, "My spirit will never leave this earth until it hears the strains of Bach's great aria in 're.'" Edouard Mauaselin sang the Ave Maria with a wistfulness that almost broke one's heart, while outside the great masses watched the spiral of grey smoke which later turned to white and wafted away to melt into the clouds. Raymond during this ceremony went outside to speak a few words to the multitude.

When he had finished, Elizabeth and I accompanied him up the steps. Then the most extraordinary ceremony took place. Behind the heavy curtain, and there before our eyes, they drew from the glaring furnace the asbestos couch containing the last remains of Isadora. Oh, God! How wonderful it was! Her ashes just formed a trace of her figure dancing. It looked like a white drawing of her. The only earthly thing left was the dome of her exquisite little skull. At once Byron's act in snatching Shelley's heart from the flames came to me, but at the same moment the whole thing dissolved into ashes.

I wish I could describe the effect seeing that few handfuls of ashes had on all of us. Sorrow dropped from us

like a garment. You could no longer mourn Isadora in these ashes. We felt instantaneously the nothingness of all earthly flesh, and that she was not and never could have been of this clay. Isadora, who was always all spirit, had now come into her own and the crowd outside who had seen the smoke ascend, had seen more of the real Isadora than we who now beheld her ashes.

If only all people would be brave and have the courage to cremate their loved ones, and look afterwards at their ashes, all the horror of death would pass away. True, nothing can help the void left in their lives, but their eyes and hearts will be lifted up to the skies, instead of shuddering at the horrible barbarous thought of the cold clay and worms.

We placed Isadora's ashes beside those of her children and her mother, but she had made me promise that one day I would take these ashes and scatter them in the sea.

The great fearless brave spirit had passed away, but the message she left behind will live forever.

"Adieu, mes amis. Je vais à la gloire!"

THE END